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ABSTRACT

In order to help teachers of business communication look for new and innovative ways to improve their teaching, this book offers a "how to" approach to various topics in business communication. The ideas expressed in this book are a collaboration of 32 members of The Association for Business Communication who served on the Teaching Methodology and Concepts Committee during 1981-1984. Each topic covered follows a specific format consisting of six sections: introduction, theory and principles, suggested teaching unit, classroom activities, summary, and selected annotated bibliography. The topics covered are: ethics, international business communication, creativity, small group decisionmaking, microcomputer software, stress management, conflict resolution, assertive behavior, humor, listening, nonverbal communication, interviewing, conferencing, oral presentations, and career preparation and planning. (SRT)

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METHODS OF TEACHING SELECTED TOPICS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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PREFACE

As effective teachers of business communications, we constantly look for new and innovative ways to improve our teaching. We strive to make each class better, learning from our past experiences. Sometimes, however, we might want to do something a little different. Perhaps we might want to present a concept that we have never considered before or to present a topic from a different frame of reference. What this book does is to give you this opportunity. It is a "how to" approach to various topics in business communication.

The ideas expressed in this book are not those of just a few individuals, but a collaboration of 32 members of The Association for Business Communication who contributed their valuable time, effort, and expertise to the Teaching Methodology and Concepts Committee during 1981-1984. The results of their hard work is a compilation of reports on how to teach selected topics in business communication. This book does not cover all the areas of concern to business communication teachers, but it does reflect the particular interests of the committee members each year. But I am sure you will agree that the topics in this book are timely and varied enough to give teachers excellent choices to use in their classes.

Fifteen topics are included ranging from ethical and international concerns to career preparation

and planning. Each topic follows a specific format for uniformity and consistency. The format consists of six sections: introduction, theory and principles, suggested teaching unit, classroom activities, summary, and selected annotated bibliography. The purpose of this approach is to provide both experienced and new teachers of business communication with a resource that is self-contained. In other words, if some teachers decide to teach a particular topic, all they would have to do is review the specific section and implement it without having to do additional preparation. Our intent, therefore, is to provide teachers with a tool to increase their effectiveness.

This book was truly a team effort. I am deeply grateful to Meada Gibbs, my co-chair for the past four years, whose support and feedback made the coordination of each year's projects run smoothly, to George H. Douglas, ABC Special Publications Editor, for his help during this project, to the sub-committee chairs who were responsible for completing each report, and finally to all the members of the Teaching Methodology and Concepts Committee whose efforts will help our entire membership become even more effective teachers of business communication.

Steven P. Golen, Editor

ETHICAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

ETHICS

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In a survey of 131 business majors on the graduate and undergraduate levels, John A. Pearce, II discovered that the students "judged the climate in American business to be essentially unethical—by a ratio of two to one."¹ An overwhelming majority of 88 percent expected pressures to compromise their ethics in the business world. Half the students accepted the idea that they will engage in behavior that is less than ethical. Pearce cites other research that reveals a tolerance among business majors for ethical practices that are not above-board or of dubious standards.²

Studies by Pitney Bowes, Inc. and Uniroyal, Inc. bear out the students' expectation. In a group of 800 managers surveyed anonymously, most felt pressure to compromise personal ethics for company goals. This was true of 59 percent in the Pitney Bowes study and 70 percent in the Uniroyal study. Professor Archie B. Carroll, III of the University of Georgia surveyed a random sample of corporate managers throughout the United States in a similar study. His respondents revealed that 64 percent felt under pressure to compromise personal ethics for company goals. Respondents at Pitney Bowes and Uniroyal supported a code of ethics for business and the teaching of ethics in business schools by a ratio of 9 to 1.³

The importance of studying ethics is gaining more popularity today, but many schools do not offer a separate course in ethics. The basic business communication course can be structured to include some training in ethics, with emphasis on the communications area. Therefore, the objectives of this unit are to provide an overview of some basic ethical principles, to offer a plan to use when teaching ethics in a classroom, to suggest various classroom activities and films that can be used to illustrate ethical concerns, and to supply additional resources for further information on ethics.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

The popular understanding of ethical concerns is a narrow view of personal behavior related to sex, alcohol, gambling, lying, stealing, and cheating at the most obvious and blatant level. This equation of ethics is woefully inadequate to deal with the ethical concerns of business in today's society. E. Clinton Gardner defines ethics as the critical study of morality: "Ethics pertains to all of man's activities which may meaningfully be praised or blamed. It is concerned with all of his behavior to which the concepts of 'duty,' 'ought,' and 'the good' are relevant. It pertains to the choice of means as well as to the choice of ultimate ends."⁴ "Morals" and "ethics" refer to rules and standards of conduct and right living in a society and to the individual's practice in relation to these. "Ethics" implies high standards of honest and honorable dealing, and of methods used, especially in the professions and business.⁵

Ethical Concepts of Right and Good

Traditional treatments of ethics deal with the analysis of two concepts, *the right* and *the good*. The concept of *right* (as opposed to wrong) involves ideas of duty, moral law, and of what one *ought* to do. The ideal life for man is envisaged as obedience to law. The ethical question of this concept is "What is my duty?" The concept of *good* is concerned with ideals or ends to be sought. The ideal life in the pursuit of *the good* is the satisfaction of desire and the achievement of ends. The ethical question is, "What is the highest good?" Neither concept can be used exclusively for all ethical decisions.

What is "Right" and "Good" is Culturally Determined

The idea of a "universal ethic" with accompanying guidelines that would be definite for all people at all times and in all places is a myth. The acceptance of what is right and good is determined by the culture in which the question arises. Robert Pirsig, author of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, uses the analogy of culture-fabric:⁶ "A culture is a *fabric*" said Pirsig, "woven by a group of people, sometimes over hundreds and thousands of years. It consists of ways to interact, rituals, modes of conduct, all developed to meet the needs of that community to ensure its survival. . . . The important fact to remember is that each piece of fabric is unique."⁷ Howell continues the analogy by evaluating the ethical value of actions this way: "Whatever strengthens or protects the fabric of culture is ethical. What strains, weakens, or tears it is unethical."⁸ This point is illustrated by the ethics of interpersonal communication in Japan. As John C. Condon writes in *Interpersonal Communication*, the contextual basis for ethics is culturally derived.⁹

BASIC GUIDELINES

While there is not a universal ethic *per se*, there are basic guides to assist even beginners in conscious and intelligent ethical decision making: "Social Utility," "General Law Tests," and the "Long-Range Utility Standard."

Social Utility poses two standards:

1. Whatever has social utility contributes to the survival of the groups.
2. Socially useful behavior safeguards the well-beings of individuals in that collective.

The probable or actual results of an act determines its social utility. At its weakest level, an ethical act does not interfere with the objectives of a group. Nor does it harm the individuals affected. At its strongest level an ethical act enhances the objectives of the group and is of benefit to the individual members. "You rarely hear the equivalent of an American *no* in Japan; one student has catalogued some sixteen different ways of avoiding a direct *no*, because that nasty word marks a break of harmony."¹⁰

General Law. The "general law" test was developed by the 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant as his "categorical imperative." The question is, could the action be made into a

general law for all? Related questions ask if this law would further the general welfare of a society and its members. What if everybody did it? Can the action be justified as a precedent for all people in the future?

Long-Range Utility. The long-range utility standard, also called the pragmatic standard, judges an action on the basis of its long-range consequences for society as a whole, not merely its immediate or short-range effects. These basic guides require an understanding of the cultural "fabric" in which they are to be applied in order to be effective. The bounds of ethical behavior are ultimately set by the law of the land. As Owens writes:

. . . a business can pursue actions and policies only insofar as the public approves and no further. The attitudes and values of the public, the prevailing "national ethics," rule the free political process and in turn determine the laws of the land. . . . Ultimately the consensus of public attitudes dominates the political process of law-making which sets the rules on what a business can and cannot do.¹¹

However, there are many principles of ethics each of us has in interpersonal communication which we use without consulting a legal code. John C. Condon identifies eight principles which operate in interpersonal communication:¹²

1. *Candor*. We want *no* to mean *no*. We want disagreement expressed directly. "Put positively, we must do what we can to encourage openers, trust, and genuine sharing of honest beliefs and feelings."

2. *Social Harmony*. The Japanese avoidance of *no* reflects the value of interdependence over individualism, social harmony over individual expression. A related adage is "If you can't say something good, don't say anything."

3. *Fidelity*. The message received should be as close as possible to the message sent. The message must get through with as little distortion as possible. Feedback from the receiver helps check accuracy and fidelity.

4. *Deception*. Exaggeration of information or withholding of information is held to be a breach of principles.

5. *Acknowledgment*. Is it ethical to ignore what is said to you by phone? "In some respects the failure to acknowledge a letter received is more unethical than not answering a telephone, because the letter at least identifies the sender, whereas the ringing phone may not."¹³

6. *Consistency of Word and Act.* As we generally feel it is not right to deceive another person by telling a deliberate falsehood, so we also feel it is not right to contradict our words deliberately with inconsistent actions.

7. *Keeping Confidences and Sharing.* Secrets or confidences demand choices of loyalties and identification with the discloser and not with anyone else. Is it ethical to encourage another to hear in confidence with the promise that it will never be shared?

8. *Access to Secrets and Invasion of Privacy.* Is it ethical for any organization or institution to gather and maintain information about a person and yet withhold access to that information from the person? With this principle we move back into national ethics regulated by law.

In summary, ethics refers to standards of conduct and right behavior in a society, especially applied to the professions and business. The concepts of moral law and pursuit of the good underlie the guiding questions of "social utility," "general law test," and "long-range utility." Each society regulates the limits of ethical actions by legislation. Principles of ethics in interpersonal communication illustrate ethical decision-making issues from simple candor to invasion of privacy.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

A course in business communication should increase the individual students' awareness of the importance of ethics and provide the student with effective means to make decisions which reflect high ethical standards. A unit of two fifty-minute periods should establish a basic orientation toward the need for ethics, an understanding of basic ethical concepts, and practical application of ethical questions to specific situations.

Students' understanding of ethics primarily reflects personal concepts of right and wrong shaped by a particular religious persuasion or understanding of the nature of mankind. Ethics as a discipline will most likely be a totally new experience for students. Ethical issues have considerable emotional involvement, and the instructor will need to concentrate on the objective nature of ethical inquiry. This is especially important when there is a difference among students about the ethical nature of a particular situation (or issue).

The ethical concept regarding moral law or "the right" should be balanced in presentation by the

concept of "the good or desirable ends." An unbalanced presentation may lead to an understanding of ethics as simply keeping the law or taking a passive stance in terms of the public well-being. Equally as important is the active posture of pursuit of "the good." Students should explore the ethical bases underlying government regulations of business and economic practices.

In light of Pearce's study that 88 percent of students surveyed expect their personal sense of ethics to come under pressure, a high level of student interest and involvement in this unit should be expected. The desired goal for the students is to develop a higher level of ethical standards in the practice of business.

I. Objectives of Unit

- A. Define ethics in its broadest sense.
- B. Use the concepts of "right" and "good" when making ethical standards.
- C. Understand the cultural bases of ethical standards.
- D. Give the bases for society's or government's regulation of business activities.
- E. Apply ethical guidelines or tests to specific communication situations.

II. Fundamentals of Ethics

- A. Morals and ethics refer to rules and standards of conduct and right behavior in a society.
- B. Ethics implies high standards of honest and honorable dealing, and of methods used, especially in the professions and business.
- C. Ethics involves two concepts of "the right" and "the good."
 1. The ideal life is obedience to law in the sphere of "the right."
 2. The ideal life is the pursuit of the good. The ethical question is, "What is the highest good?"
- D. Ethics arise out of a particular culture and are not universal in application.
- E. Tests or guides of assisting ethical decisions:
 1. Social Utility
 2. General Law
 3. Long-Range Utility
- F. Societies have the power to enforce ethics through legislation.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

To introduce the unit on ethics, copies of the code of ethics of several of the professional associations could be studied by the students in small

groups. A comparison of the codes of ethics of such professional groups as the National Association of Realtors, the National Association of Accountants, or the Certified Professional Secretaries would show any similarities or differences which exist in the codes.

A good starting point for discussion would be a film. Depending on what approach you take to discuss ethics, four films on a range of topics pertaining to ethics are annotated in the next section.

Newspaper articles dealing with ethics in business could focus attention of the class on the ever-present need for moral standards. Students who are just beginning their careers in the business world need the support of the classroom instructor in upholding ideals to improve the business climate. Various magazine articles dealing with ethics also can be used as a springboard for class discussion, with implications for the communications area.

The case study method of presenting ethics would be an excellent activity to continue the study. Basic business communication textbooks which contain ideas for students are *Business Communication* by Lee, et al. and *Communication for Business and the Professions* by Malra Treece. *The Emphatic Communicator* by William S. Howell contains short cases in Chapter 8 which could be used.

If reports are required, a history of the meaning of tip (to insure protection) and the connection of tips and bribes to obtain business contracts would make a good library research problem. The student might reach a conclusion on how this system could be changed. With the emphasis on international jobs (some predictions are that two or three jobs will be dependent on international business), the implications of ethics on the international scene need to be explored.

Instructors teach ethics by the actual conduct of the classroom. How the students are treated and how students treat each other and the instructor are part of the dynamics of the classroom which may speak louder than the few days devoted to the "study of ethics."

ANNOTATED LIST OF FILMS

The following is an annotated list of some popular films, along with the distributors' mailing addresses:

RULES OF THE GAME (19 minutes; color)

Through a variety of job situations in such

critical areas as loyalty, work habits, deadlines, business etiquette, and power structures, the film shows the responsibilities of both employer and employee. A positive approach to the work ethic shows how everyone benefits through improved productivity. Available from Instructional Resources Center, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

PEOPLE AT WORK . . .

A RIGHT TO REFUSE (13 minutes; color)

One of the most critical and disputed actions of a worker is examined in a case study: the refusal of an assignment made by management. The job assigned is a dangerous one and the response of the worker is dramatically conveyed. Available from Instructional Resources Center, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

IF . . . (10 minutes; color)

The film examines why a person makes excuses to cover a bad performance or defend a fault. The film shows that excuses waste time and often block solutions to the problem. Available from Thompson-Mitchell and Associates, 3384 Peachtree Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30326.

HOW GOOD IS

A GOOD GUY? (21 minutes; color)

The film shows what happens when the manager tries to play the part of a good guy and accepts substandard work. A manager's needs for approval can hinder efficient production. Available from Prentice-Hall Media, Serv Code BB, 150 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591.

SUMMARY

In today's highly competitive business, employees are pressured to produce. Unfortunately, because of this climate, employees may compromise their situation in order to achieve their objectives. The possibility exists that in the future our students may find themselves in these situations that will test their ethical standards. Because of the nature of the business communication class, instructors can provide their students some experience in dealing with ethical issues. Through the use of this unit, instructors can help their students' thinking regarding this important aspect of life.

NOTES

1. John A. Pearce, II, "Newcomers' Need for a Code of Business Ethics," *The Collegiate Forum*, Fall 1978, p. 11.
2. Pearce, p. 11.
3. "The Pressure to Compromise Personal Ethics," *Business Week*, January 31, 1977, p. 107.
4. E. Clinton Gardner, *Biblical Faith and Social Ethics*, New York: Harper & Row, 1960, p. 4.
5. Jess Stein, Editor-in-Chief, *The Random House Dictionary*, New York: Random House, 1966, p. 930.
6. William S. Howell, *The Emphatic Communicator*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982, p. 180.
7. Howell, p. 180.
8. Howell, p. 180.
9. John C. Condon, Jr., *Interpersonal Communication*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1977, p. 181.
10. Condon, p. 185.
11. James Owens, "Business Ethics in the College Classroom," *Journal of Business Education*, April 1983, p. 259.
12. Condon, pp. 183-199.
13. Condon, p. 191.

SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arlow, Peter and Thomas A. Ulrich, "Can Ethics Be Taught to Business Students?" *The Collegiate Forum*, Spring 1983, p. 17.

Authors administered a questionnaire on business ethics to business students. They concluded that a single course in business ethics was not enough to influence the individuals' ethics over the long run. Only short-term awareness resulted from the exposure to business ethics.

- Condon, John C. Jr., *Interpersonal Communication*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1977, pp. 181-202.

The communications field needs codes or standards of ethics. A number of ethical "issues" in daily communication are presented, and these include candor, social harmony, keeping confidences, and consistency of word and act.

- Dill, David D., *Syllabi for the Teaching of Management Ethics*, New Haven: Society for Values in

Higher Education—Summer Institute on Ethical Issues, December 1979.

A series of five syllabi are presented, focusing on management ethics. Two are designed for undergraduate philosophy courses, and the other three for business courses.

- Hawkins, Brian L. and Paul Preston, *Managerial Communication*, Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 146, 350-352.

Communication skills are neither positive nor negative, but it is possible for the individual to use these skills in a manipulative, unethical way. Ethics is basically a personal, individual matter. Social responsibility pressures individuals into making decisions which they wouldn't normally make.

- Howell, William S., *The Emphatic Communicator*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982, pp. 179-199.

Presents an operational or practical approach to business ethics. An operational approach is better than a prescriptive approach because it maintains an "open system" and allows situational and contextual elements to modify policy.

- Huber, C.E., *The Promise and Perils of Business Ethics*, Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges, 1979.

A survey of the member schools of the Association of American Colleges found that 28 percent of the respondents did not offer business ethics courses. The others reported that ethics training was presented in a wide variety of areas.

- Klimes, Rudolf W., "Development of Teaching Objectives in Professional Ethics," *Improving College and University Teaching*, Vol. 26, Winter 1978, pp. 91-95.

Contains guidelines and objectives for the development of a graduate business ethics course. A five-step model and bibliography are included.

- Lee, Lajuana W., Sallye S. Benoit, Wilma C. Moore, and Celeste S. Powers, *Business Communication*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980, pp. 401-404.

Provides a definition of ethics and presents examples of contemporary ethical questions.

Owens, James, "Business Ethics in the College Classroom," *Journal of Business Education*, Vol. 58, April 1983, pp. 258-262.

Suggests there is a need for business ethics courses because of the difficulty companies encounter in concealing unethical actions in this "information age." There are two basic ways to teach business ethics: 1) in a single formal course, and 2) in all business courses. Author suggests techniques to insure success in teaching business ethics.

Pearce, John A. II, "Newcomers' Need for a Course of Business Ethics," *The Collegiate Forum*, Fall 1978, pp. 11-12.

Results of a survey of business majors at a major university show that a majority of students (65 percent) viewed the business environment as unethical. Most students expected to encounter challenges to their personal codes of ethics, and a majority thought they would be willing to compromise.

"The Pressure to Compromise Personal Ethics," *Business Week*, January 31, 1977, p. 107.

An anonymous survey of managers at two companies, Pitney-Bowes, Inc. and Uniroyal, found that a majority of managers felt pressured to compromise their personal ethics in meeting corporate objectives. Ninety percent of those surveyed recommended the teaching of business ethics in business schools.

Silva, Macel L., "Business Ethics: What's Right? What's Wrong?" *Management World*, August 1980, pp. 12-14.

Ethical views are derived from a number of sources, and they are basically cultural and situational in nature. Often it is necessary to be flexible in setting and administering ethical standards, but companies should establish written ethical codes and provisions for punishments if codes are violated.

The Teaching of Ethics, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY: The Hastings Center, 1980.

A series of monographs examining ethics teaching in undergraduate and professional schools. These cover the areas of journalism, law, engineering, and business. Each monograph contains information on the history of ethics in its area, current developments in the field, and recommendations for improvement.

Treece, Malra, *Communication for Business and the Professions*, 2nd ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1983, pp. 96-100.

Equates ethics with the "old fashioned" values—truth and honesty. Using the you-attitude, persuasion, and stressing the benefits of a situation (as opposed to the negative aspects), are not unethical practices.

Stevens, George E., "Ethical Inclinations of Tomorrow's Citizens: Actions Speak Louder?" *Journal of Business Education*, Vol. 59, pp. 147-152.

This article deals with a study on the ethical standards of business students; (Newstrom and Ruch study, 1976). The results of the study showed that students generally viewed themselves with higher ethical standards than their peers, but less ethical than faculty members. The author also discusses reasons for unethical behavior and ways to prevent this.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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The development, especially in the 20th century, of transportation and electronics has brought the world closer together and resulted in a dwindling of geographical distance. This shrinking of the world has resulted in the identification of all business communication as inevitably international business communication. Even remote small businesses will sooner or later face the need to deal with a non-native speaker, foreign suppliers, differences in measurement of weight or temperature, or some other situation involving cultural, linguistic, or legal/political dissimilarities.

For despite the shrinkage of the world, the historical differences remain; they are perhaps even sharpened by their new proximity. How does an instructor of business communication convey to an undergraduate audience the extent of the problems and their potential solutions? This report attempts to provide some guidance by discussing the theory and principles of business communication and providing a suggested teaching unit and classroom activities.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

International business communication involves more than overcoming language barriers to effect a successful exchange of information and ideas or the achievement of a desired response. Even without the language barrier, international business communication would remain challenging because it must bridge cultures. Even use of a common language may, in fact, be more misleading than facilitating, when wide cultural differences or

interference by the patterns of a native language separate senders and receivers of messages.¹ Intercultural communication involves recognizing and overcoming culturally based differences in such areas as customs, values, assumptions, expectations, thinking patterns, nonverbal behavior, and structuring of social relations. Because persons of different cultural backgrounds commonly perceive, interpret, and respond to information and events differently, they frequently misunderstand one another, give unintended signals, and elicit unexpected reactions. They may then compound their difficulties by viewing them as arising from personal animosity rather than cultural conditioning. The challenges of cross-cultural communication, moreover, are not to be found solely in international dealings; such challenges also pervade domestic business communication with members of minority groups that maintain their own distinct culture.²

A common approach to intercultural communication consists of identifying local customs and scrupulously observing them. Time, place, space, class, and context have different levels of importance from culture to culture. The manner of their observance differs also. Major factors behind different orientations of cultures include emphasis on individual or group identity, relationship of business and social activities, egalitarian or hierarchical structuring of social relations, and degree of attention to context. Recognizing cultural differences is a necessary first step toward understanding. But an exclusive concern with superficial conventions of behavior—essentially an international etiquette approach—may create a dangerous

illusion of understanding and feed a false assumption that cultures differ only in their customs. Many cultures have points of similarity which may lead to a false feeling of cultural understanding. For this reason, "similarities [between cultures] are more often deceptive and more dangerous than evident differences."³ Effective intercultural communication requires an effort to understand these superficial differences as expressions of more fundamental differences: "We would be mistaken to regard the communication patterns which we observe around the world as no more than a miscellaneous collection of customs. The communication pattern of a given society is part of its total cultural pattern and can only be understood in that context."⁴ In addition, the values, thought processes, and assumptions common in another culture may require radical changes in communication strategies. What fits the psychology of one culture will not necessarily fit that of another.

Only with an effort to understand the fundamentally different character of another culture will the international business communicator begin to be prepared to *anticipate* probable responses to information, actions, and offers with any certainty or to *interpret* information, actions, and offers with any certainty.

The extent to which understanding and adjusting to a foreign culture are possible may itself be limited by cultural conditioning. We tend to learn more about our own unrecognized cultural traits in dealing with other cultures than we learn or are willing or able to accept from the other culture. As Edward T. Hall has further noted: "An intercultural or interethnic encounter can be used to highlight otherwise hidden structure points of one's behavior at a rate many times faster than the normal exigencies of life will reveal that same hidden structure. At home, people make mistakes and violate norms; they just don't make as many or as serious mistakes as they do when they are overseas."⁵

Although being rooted in one culture may limit the ability to comprehend fully another culture beyond what Hall calls a "token understanding,"⁶ intercultural rapport and communication will benefit from heightened concern and sensitivity toward cultural differences.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Since we live in a global society, a course in business communication should provide each

student with some basic knowledge of the elements of international business communication. The outline below is not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to capture in organized form some of the broadest themes in international business communication and to apply them to a particular situation. The outline specifies no number of contact hours; that would be determined by the amount of time available and by the extent of detail desired.

- I. Shrinking world and growing importance of the international dimension in modern business
 - A. Rapid international and intercontinental transportation
 - B. Electronic communication
- II. Persistence of historic differences
 - A. Linguistic
 - B. Cultural
 - C. Political/legal⁷
 - D. Other
- III. Broad socioeconomic relationships
 - A. Relationships within the First World (e.g., between Japan and the United States)
 - B. Relationships between the Third World and the First World⁸
- IV. Classroom activities (See next section of this report.)
 - A. Discussion of readings
 - B. Presentation
 1. By foreign student or other non-native
 2. By native with international experience
 - C. International mailing
- V. Review and concluding remarks

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Classroom activities for international business communication can be interesting and varied. The three activities set forth below may suggest others.

Discussion of Readings

A useful classroom activity is the discussion of certain readings which have particular application to international business communication.

Most North Americans always seem to be in a hurry to do most things, and this trait certainly manifests itself in their business communication. Therefore, the instructor should make sure that American and Canadian business communication students read Edward T. Hall's article "The Silent Language in Overseas Business" from the *Harvard Business Review*.⁹ Hall stresses that, with few exceptions, Americans are relative newcomers to the international business scene. He discusses the language of time, space, friendship, and agreements. Even though this article was written in 1960, the principles presented are still relevant today.

M. Latif Javed has written two excellent articles on international business communication, in the January and February 1981 issues of *Today's Secretary*.¹⁰ In these articles Javed provides some excellent suggestions regarding do's and don't's concerning international business correspondence. Business communication students should be required to read both these articles.

For succinctly stated suggestions about sending international mail, instructors should see *Business Communication* by LaJuana W. Lee, Sallye S. Benoit, Wilma C. Moore, and Celeste S. Powers, and *Writing Business Letters and Reports* by Carmella Mansfield and Margaret Bahniuk.¹¹

The instructor may find *English for International Business* by Gordon Drummond¹² very helpful in stimulating student interest in international business.

Presentations

Many undergraduates in North American universities are surprisingly inexperienced in relationships with foreigners. Some of this inexperience unfortunately arises from a kind of English-speaking allness—a belief that people with non-native accents, turbans on their heads, and lack of enthusiasm for a fast-food, drive-"thru" culture are just wrong. Whereas it is unlikely that the problem can be entirely corrected during a few minutes in a classroom, some progress toward international understanding may be accomplished by requesting a foreign student or other foreign-born person to discuss with the class his or her adjustments to the adopted cultural environment. Likewise, the class may be enlightened by learning of the experiences of a native student who has significant experience abroad.

International Mailing

A practical exercise could be one which focuses on international mailing. Of course, this is merely one aspect of international business communication, but it will exemplify many of the problems. The outline set forth below should be useful in assisting students with GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE:

I. Objectives

A. To accomplish proficiency in using Publication 51 of the United States Postal Service, *International Postage Rates and Fees*¹³:

B. To address envelopes and packages being sent to a foreign country properly

C. To ascertain when Forms 2966-A, 2966, and 2972 are required with each parcel post package.

II. Procedures for international mailing

A. Two categories for international correspondence:

1. LC mail (letters, letter packages, aerogrammes, and postal cards)

2. AO mail (printed matter, matter for the blind, and small packets)

B. Preparation of Postal Union articles for international mailing:

1. Reserve at least the right half of the address side for the addressee's address, the stamps, and the service's labels and notations;

2. Address legibly and completely, using Roman letters and Arabic numerals placed lengthwise on only one side of the articles;

3. Give house number and street or box number when mail is meant for towns or cities;

4. Show names of post office and country of destination in capital letters, and include postal code, if known;

5. Put foreign postal codes for most countries before (to the left of) the name of the country of destination;

6. Put name of the country last in the address, and do not abbreviate this name;

7. Use the English words for the names of the post office, province, and country (earlier parts of the address may be in the foreign language, provided that the sender represents it in Roman characters);

8. Put the sender's name and address in the upper left corner of the address side;

9. Seal all registered letters and registered letter packages;

10. Seal other letters and packages as follows:
 - a. Ordinary letters and small packets may be sealed;
 - b. Printed matter may be sealed if postage is paid by permit imprint, postage-meter stamps, or second-class indication;
11. Leave unsealed any matter for the blind;
12. Endorse the envelopes or wrappers or Postal Union articles other than letters to show that classification under which they are mailed;
13. Affix the green customs label Form 2976 to small packets, letters, and letter packages containing dutiable merchandise and dutiable printed matter;
14. Complete and enclose Form 2967-A, Customs Declaration, if sender prefers, or if the contents exceed \$120 in value (only the upper portion of the green label should be affixed to the cover of the package).

SUMMARY

International communication has become a major problem in business. The problem is more extensive and intensive than most undergraduates would realize. A basic course in business communication which seeks to cover international themes must graft into its treatment of business communication theory a consideration of linguistic, cultural, and legal/political historic differences which have been highlighted by the rapid advance of technology in transportation and in communication during the 20th century. A teaching unit using readings, presentations, and a project is one approach to exemplifying the problem.

NOTES

1. Saburo Haneda and Hirosuke Shima, "Japanese Communication Behavior as Reflected in Letter Writing," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Winter 1982, pp. 19-32; Yasukiko Kobayashi, "Differences in Advertising Creativity Between the U.S. and Japan: A Cultural Point of View," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Winter 1980, pp. 23-31.

2. Useful commentary on intercultural communication will be found in Jean Johnston, "Business Communication in Japan," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Spring 1976, pp. 65-70; in Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, New York: Doubleday, 1959; and in Andrea Rich, *Interracial*

Communication, New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

3. Saburo Haneda, "On International Cooperation for Business Communication Studies," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Spring 1976, p. 29.

4. Edward T. Hall and William Foote Whyte, "Intercultural Communication: A Guide to Men of Action," in Alfred E. Smith (Ed.), *Communication and Culture*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1986.

5. Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, New York: Anchor Press, p. 83.

6. Hall, *The Silent Language*, p. 53.

7. See, e.g., Richard David Ramsey, A. R. Parsinia, Jerry Kinard, and Peter Wright, "The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and Its Impact on U.S. Small Business Engaged in International Trade," *Southwestern Small Business Institute Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, 1983, pp. 155-162.

8. More on this in Peter Wright, "Doing Business in Islamic Markets," *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 1981, pp. 34, 36, 38, 40; Jagjit S. Brar, Richard David Ramsey, and Peter Wright, "Six Challenges to Global Corporation," *Collegiate Forum*, Spring 1982, p. 14.

9. Edward T. Hall, "The Silent Language in Overseas Business," *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 38, May-June 1960, pp. 87-96.

10. M. Latif Javed, "Making a Smooth Transmission Through International Correspondence," *Today's Secretary*, January 1981, pp. 18-23; and M. Latif Javed, "The Longitudes and Latitudes of International Mailing," *Today's Secretary*, February 1981, p. 15.

11. LaJuana Lee, et al, *Business Communication*, Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1980, p. 124; C. Mansfield and Margaret H. Bahniuk, *Writing Business Letters and Reports*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing Co., 1981, pp. 231-232.

12. Gordon Drummond, *English for International Business*, London: George G. Harrop, 1970.

13. Published in Washington for the U.S. Postal Service by the U.S. Government Printing Office. See esp. pp. 8-10 of the 1983 printing.

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Berry, Thomas E., *Russian for Business: Typewriting and Documents*, Urbana, IL: U.S. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC Document ED 168367), 1978, 116 pp.

Basically a textbook designed for undergraduates interested in an elementary study of Russian typewriting with particular emphasis on memoranda, applications, statements, business letters, inquiries, references, and official documents used for trading with the Soviet Union.

Hildebrandt, Herbert W., "Business Communication Consulting and Research in Multilingual Companies," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Spring 1978, pp. 19-26.

Describes issues regarding consulting in Germany with the suggestion that there are parallel issues for other countries.

Hildebrandt, Herbert W. (Ed.), *International Business Communication: Theory, Practice, Teaching Throughout the World* (Michigan International Business Studies No. 17). Ann Arbor: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, 1981.

Readings on the status of business communication from various national perspectives.

International Labour Office, Editorial and Document Services Department. *Terminology Guidance to Make Your Work Easier: English, French, Spanish, German, Russian*. Geneva: International Labour Office. (U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 145 669, 1977 March), 32 pp.

This terminology circular is one of a series issued by the International Labour Office and designed to facilitate the work of translators, editors, and other staff members. The circular contains official titles of personnel, offices, bureaus, branches, departments, and other organizational units of the ILO. Entries are listed first in English, then translated into French, Spanish, German, and Russian.

Lathan, M. Gerald, "Internationalizing Business Communication," in Robert B. Mitchell and Marian Crawford Webber (Eds.), *Credibility in Business Communication: Proceedings [of the] Southeast ABCA Regional Conference March 31 - April 2, 1983*, pp. 3-8.

An introduction to the broad general themes of international business communication with

sensitivity toward the needs of colleges of business in the United States.

Lester, Mark, et al. *ELT Documents: English as an International Language*. Urbana, IL: U.S. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC Document ED 176598), 1978, 1 pp.

Articles ranging from a theoretical discussion of the nature of an international language to an assessment of the implications of teaching a local form of English. Also contains a specialized bibliography, a selected list of documents from ERIC Archives; news items; an annotated bibliography of recent books, films, and tapes; and a cumulative index to documents.

McLaren, Margaret, "Modest Beginnings: Business Communication in New Zealand," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Summer 1981, pp. 11-15.

A description of business communication education in New Zealand.

Musso, V., and Zangrando, R., *The Fiat Thesaurus: An Experiment by a Multinational Company*. Urbana, IL: U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, (ERIC Document ED 175236), 1977, 21 pp.

Description of a vocabulary that was compiled and is currently used at Fiat. The vocabulary of thousands of words is steadily increasing. Although the key words contained in the vocabulary are mainly in Italian, other languages are also represented. The vocabulary proved to be comprehensible to people whose native language was not Italian.

Ramsey, Richard David, "Teaching Native and Nonnative Speakers Together in Professional Communication Courses," Paper presented at the 17th International Convention of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), Toronto, 1983, March 15-20. Abstracted in the program, p. 244. Oral version published as audio cassette TCH 107 in Toronto by Audio Archives of Canada.

Discusses strategies and techniques for best handling the situation of the international student in professional communication courses. Points to further references. Photostatic copies available from the author.

Rath, Henry J., "Management Techniques in International Technology," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Winter 1976, pp. 25-35.

Discusses the types of diffusion of technological knowledge and the significance of technology transfer. Based on an investigation of three transfer programs: one in the United States, one in Canada, and one in Germany and Italy.

Sherwood, Bruce Arne, and Chens, Chin-Chuan, *A Linguistics Course on International Communication and Constructed Languages*. Urbana, IL: U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, (ERIC Document ED 182995), 1979, 15 pp.

Describes a course on international communication and constructed languages. General topics covered include roles various national languages have played in international communication, special forms of English, language practices and policies in international organizations and conferences, and history and classification of constructed languages.

Vanden Bersh, Bruce G., and Sentell, Gerald D., *A Visual Language for World Marketing*. Urbana, IL: U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, (ERIC Document ED 176288), August 1979, 26 pp.

Vanden Bersh and Sentell claim that practical solutions to many of the communication obstacles found in international markets can be developed through a widespread adoption of a standardized system of international graphic symbols.

Zong, Boalin, and Hildebrandt, Herbert W., "Business Communication in the People's Republic of China," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Winter 1983, pp. 25-32.

Describes the preeminent position held by business communication in China's largest business school, explains the understanding of business communication by the Chinese, and focuses on the courses taught and the methods of instruction used.

CREATIVE ELEMENTS

CREATIVITY

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Creativity is a much sought after quality in the business world, as there is a continuous need for fresh, original solutions to existing problems. The constantly changing environment and the continual pressure of competition form the basis for a demand for creativity in business. Individuals who can develop their creative abilities and apply them to any problem-solving situation or assignment will possess a valuable trait that will likely increase both personal and organizational productivity and satisfaction.

Therefore, the objectives of this unit are to provide a basic overview of creativity, to offer a plan to use when teaching creativity in a classroom, to suggest various classroom activities and audio-visual aids that can develop students' creative talents, and to supply additional resources for further information on creativity.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

Creativity can best be thought of as purposeful imagination. Every invention of a product, process, or machine contains some creative element. Advertisers and business communicators strive to make their copy, sales letters, and slogans new and original. The mere process of selecting words with which to communicate involves creativity. In short, every time a business person faces a problem, large or small, he or she has an opportunity to be creative.

Most people, however, conceive of creativity as a very unusual human quality that is an inborn characteristic. For example, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Graham Bell, and Cyrus McCormick are usually thought of as creative individuals endowed with great powers. Though there may be validity in viewing creativity as a unique attribute found only in certain gifted individuals, contemporary researchers perceive creativity as a process that can be learned. In describing the main logic of the creative problem, Vargin says:

Suddenly, in times of frustration or of quiet during the heat of a discussion or while driving on a highway, a flash appears unexpectedly in our mind and forms a new pattern of associations, a new idea, a new vision. Whether it is a simple solution to a trivial problem or a deep intuition that will transform our life, something new has been created. Though it is elusive, we receive it with joy. Though it is imponderable, we may consider it most precious. This moment of insight, this "Aha!" experience, is the central phenomenon of the creative process.¹

Though each person's mind functions differently, research has revealed that the creative process typically goes through the following five stages:

1. preparation or saturation—becoming thoroughly familiar with a problem;
2. deliberation or frustration—mulling over ideas,

analyzing them, challenging them, thinking of them from several viewpoints;

3. incubation—relaxing, turning off the conscious and purposeful search;

4. illumination—hitting upon a bright idea, new, fresh, different approach, something that gives one the feeling of being the right thing to do;

5. elaboration or accommodation—clarifying the idea, seeing whether it fits the requirements of the problem as it did on first examination, reframing and adapting it, putting it on paper, getting other people's reaction to it.²

Contrary to popular belief, creative acts do not fall from the heavens; they represent the outcome of hard labor. Benjamin Franklin was right when he remarked that "creativity is 95 percent perspiration and 5 percent inspiration." The kind of work involved in building one's conceptual skills for creative work is different from the ordinary activity. In many cases, it involves doing things in exactly the opposite way that one has been doing them before. This excessive unorthodoxy is designed to break one's own thinking habits, which tends to constrain and sometimes restrict creative ability.³

This unorthodox, creative way of doing things has been described by Osborn. In attempting to be creative, he suggested that the individual consider the following:

Put to other uses? New ways to use as it? Other uses if modified?

Adapt? What else is like this? What other idea does this suggest? Does past offer parallel? What could I copy? Whom could I emulate?

Modify? New twist? Change meaning, color, motion, sound, odor, form, shape? Other changes?

Magnify? What to add? More time? Greater frequency? Stronger? Higher? Longer? Duplicate? Exaggerate?

Minify? What to subtract? Smaller? Condensed? Streamline? Omit? Shorter? Split up? Understate?

Substitute? Who else instead? What else instead? Other ingredient? Other material? Other tone of voice?

Rearrange? Interchange components? Other

pattern? Other layout? Other sequence? Change pace?

Reverse? Transpose positive and negative? How about opposites? Turn it backward? Reverse roles? Turn tables?

Combine? How about a blend, an assortment, an ensemble? Combine units? Combine purposes? Combine appeals? Combine ideas?⁴

Two general conclusions emerge from this discussion of creativity: (1) creativity is not an exceptional ability only within the grasp of geniuses—anyone with reasonable intelligence may have an original idea; and (2) a lot of hard mental work is usually required to generate a new idea. Prime requisites for developing creative ability, then, are the Horatio Alger qualities of self-confidence and will to work. The imagination of a creative person "is directly related to the intensity and clarity and persistence with which the consciousness is filled with the problem to be solved."⁵

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

A course in business communication should provide each student with effective and acceptable tools of communication which can be applied in specific business situations. In order to facilitate the students' application of skills to the vast diversity of business needs and objectives, a unit of two, fifty-minute periods concerned with the development of the creative use of skills should enable students to apply their knowledge in usual and specific forms.

Creativity can be encouraged, strengthened, and developed in each individual. The traditional student attitude toward the instructor's specific goals and objectives will need to be replaced by an attitude of freedom from fear of failure, encouragement of original thinking, and support of individual effort in this unit.

The contribution of each student is to be valued for its own worth and not measured against an objective standard. The end result of each creative attempt, rather than the form or means of achievement, guides both instructor and student in exploring the creative process. The instructor should encourage the student to work toward specific objectives by whatever means appear to be productive.

Critical analyses will bring established procedures

into the process, but they are not to govern or dictate procedures.

Topic Outline

- I. Objectives of Unit
Students will be able to:
 - A. Identify the creative problem-solving process
 - B. Recognize the five stages in the creative process
 - C. Employ specific techniques for generating ideas
 - D. Attempt creative solutions to problems in a supportive class environment
 - E. Experience the creative process by an assigned task
- II. Fundamentals of Creativity
 - A. Creativity is the ability to produce new and useful ideas.
 - B. Each individual has creative abilities.
 - C. Creativity has several stages:
 1. *Preparation or Saturation*—learning everything there is to know about the subject at hand.
 2. *Deliberation or Frustration*—analyzing and challenging ideas.
 3. *Incubation*—a period of time while the creator is passive, not actively sorting and organizing the data.
 4. *Illumination*—a solution that comes suddenly and appears to be complete.
 5. *Elaboration or Accommodation*—testing of the solution by critical analysis. What are the consequences or problems with this solution?
- III. Activities
- IV. Self-Evaluation

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

One of the early activities to be used in the classroom is one which helps the students find how creative they are. Eugene Raudsepp has a simple 10-point quiz entitled, "How Far Do You Follow Your Hunches," which would be helpful to find out whether the student has a creative sensitivity already.⁶

Group Activities

Awakening one's creativity takes time and effort. It takes practice and an openness to new ideas. Support and trust must come from others in the working group. And, of course, the student must enjoy the challenge of creating something new. In order to awaken creativity in students, the following activities could be used in the classroom. Each activity requires a group of 4 to 6 students working together.

1. *Brainstorming*. A problem is presented in which participants in the groups are permitted to offer all kinds of possibilities for solution from ridiculous to very rational. No evaluation is permitted until as many ideas as possible are suggested. Participants are encouraged to be as creative as possible so that there are no inhibitions on free thought.

Brainstorming is good when the problem is rather simple. If the problem is one with many complications, one of the other suggested activities might be better. However, the hope is that the exhilarating effect from this work by students will carry over into other problem-solving situations—even in writing letters and reports.

2. *Surrogating*. In this exercise, the students are to put themselves in place of those who have the problem or they become the problem. For instance, if the problem is to get the workforce in a factory to leave the premises in good order for the next working day, the students become the workers to see what pressures are on these workers which might cause them to fail to see the importance of leaving an orderly workplace.

This technique encourages the participants to get away from themselves and to view the problem from another angle. Again, the problem might of necessity be rather simplistic.

3. *Questioning*. Students hear a story which needs some solution. Let the students become as small children and let them ask as many questions as they can which might be a part of a solution to the problem. All questions are accepted without comment from those leading the group.

4. *Analyzing*. After the questioning in statement 3, the students take the problem presented to see if they can break it into its components. The questions accepted are placed in categories which were formed in the breakdown of the problem.

After any of these four activities is tried, one person in each group moves to a new group. This person becomes the "odd person in" who serves as fresh inspiration to help in the solution of the

problem. At this point, each group leader begins to lead the group to the final solution that the group has for the problem presented.

Work for More Advanced Students

The more advanced students would want to explore the Delphi technique and Synectics. The Delphi technique requires participants to bring statements regarding expected major developments in a variety of fields. These viewpoints are offered to other members of the group who offer their opinions. A set of expectations is formed without much debate and without actually bringing the group together.⁷

Synectics is a more formalized approach to creativity developed by William J. Gordon and George M. Price. This process deals with more complex and technical problems explored with brainstorming. Every participant must be familiar with the nature of the problem. A key aspect of the problem is picked by the leader to research in more detail. The trained participants understand that they will explore their preconscious mind to develop a novel viewpoint. The ideas are frequently screened to keep participants constantly dealing with the real problem.⁸

Audiovisual Aids

Several audiovisual aids are available that can be used in developing students' creativity, and they serve as an excellent dimension to the classroom activity. The following is an annotated list of some popular audiovisual aids, along with the distributors' mailing address and phone number.

Films

**CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING:
HOW TO GET BETTER IDEAS** 28 minutes, color

This film points up the need for self-confidence to become creative, and goes beyond the brainstorming technique to synectics which helps leaders learn to manage for creativity. The film features Dr. Sidney J. Parnes, Professor of Creative Studies and President of Creative Educational Foundations.

**PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES:
THE SYNECTICS APPROACH** 28 minutes, color

This film is a documentary distillation from a Problem Solving Laboratory conducted at Synectics, Inc., in Cambridge, Massachusetts, showing a set of innovative strategies to use in stimulating

organizational creativity. The techniques can be used by individuals and groups in a business setting. This film features George M. Prince, co-founder of Synectics, Incorporated.

Both films are available from:
CRM McGraw-Hill Company
110 Fifteenth Street
Del Mar, CA 92014 (714) 454-5000

**A BETTER TRAIN
OF THOUGHT** 9½ minutes, color

A story of a group of people on a train who become unhappy when they are passed by a speedier train is presented in this film. Through different ideas and types of leaders, people's reactions to new ideas and change are shown. This story forms a basis for a discussion group to follow.

IMAGINATION AT WORK 21 minutes, color
This film shows how to develop an atmosphere to encourage creative abilities, ingenuity, initiative, and imagination.

Both films are available from:
Thompson-Mitchell and Associates
3384 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30326 (404) 233-5435

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY 14 minutes, color
Key concepts developed in the film show how changes can be initiated and innovations accomplished. Managers are challenged to accept this responsibility through creative change. The study guide which is available with the film includes a checklist of techniques to increase productivity and techniques for gaining acceptance of change.

National Educational Media, Inc.
15760 Ventura Boulevard
Encino, CA 91436 (213) 990-2125

**CREATIVE MANAGEMENT:
A KEY TO THE KINGDOM** 23 minutes, color

Using a fairy tale parable, this film points out the problem of noncreative management and paths toward greater creativity. All managers need to know ways to increase their own creative potential in others.

WHY MAN CREATES 25 minutes, color

This film examines man's creative nature. It visualizes the birth of new ideas and the social reactions to them. It also offers an answer to the question of "why man creates."

Both films are available from:
Instructional Resources Center
Himes Hall, Room 118
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

(504) 388-1135

Transparencies

GROUP CREATIVITY 10 transparencies
and a teacher guide

This series of transparencies gives reasons and suggestions for ways to make groups and individuals function more creatively.

CREATIVITY AND
IMAGINATION 10 transparencies
and a teacher guide

Reasons why some persons have imaginative abilities are explored. A test illustrates creative and noncreative responses. A sample test is included.

Both transparency sets available from:
Lansford Publishing Company
P.O. Box 8711, Department 112
San Jose, CA 95155 (408) 287-3105

SUMMARY

Businesses today are constantly involved in situations which require their employees to solve problems creatively. Each individual has the ability to be creative; however, this ability very often needs to be developed and enhanced through training activities. Because of the nature of the business communication class, instructors can provide their students with this training environment by incorporating classroom activities and assignments that will foster the students' creative talents. Through the use of this unit, instructors will be able to add a very important dimension to the students' communication skills.

NOTES

1. Vargin, James, "Creativity," *Synthesis*, Vol. 3-4, Winter 1977, p. 17.
2. Newman, W., C. Summers, and E. Warren, *The Process of Management*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967, pp. 335-356; Ghiselin Brewster, *The Creative Process*, Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1961; Koestler, Arthur, *The Art of Creativity*, New York: Macmil-

lan, 1969; Osborn, Alex, *Applied Imagination*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.

3. Smith, D., S. Carrol, T. Kefalas, and C. Watson, *Management: Making Organizations Perform*, New York: Macmillan, 1980, pp. 253-254.

4. Osborn, *Applied Imagination*, p. 18.

5. Newman, Summers, and Warren, *The Process of Management*, p. 345.

6. Raudsepp, Eugene, "Trust That Hunch!" *Success*, August 1982, pp. 26-30.

7. Bunning, Richard L., "The Delphi Technique: A Projection Tool for Serious Inquiry," *The 1979 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*, San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1979.

8. Newman, Summers, and Warren, *The Process of Management*, p. 354.

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Albrecht, Karl, *Brain Power: Learning to Improve Your Thinking Skills*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Presents methods to improve thinking skills, including the use of creative problem-solving strategies. Includes a chapter "Better Thinking in the Business World."

Barrett, F. D., "Tips and Tactics for More Creative Management," *Business Quarterly*, Autumn 1977, pp. 78-85.

The approaches used by companies with innovative teams that seek to encourage problem solving with creativity are presented in this article.

Burton, E. C., D. E. Bodley, C. G. Martin, and M. N. Thakur, "Unleashing the Creative Flow Through NGT," *Management World*, August 1980, pp. 8-10.

NGT (Nonimal Group Technique) encourages creative thinking in a group of managers attempting to solve a problem. NGT minimizes group conformity and other inhibiting factors.

Flower, Linda, *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.

A textbook utilizing the research in writing and problem solving conducted by Flower and John R. Hayes at Carnegie-Mellon University. Empha-

sis on "Real-World Writing," "Writing About Problems," and "Understanding Your Own Writing Process" gives the book a solid emphasis on practical writing situations.

Flower, Linda and John R. Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 32, December 1981, pp. 365-387.

Introduces a theory of the cognitive processes involved in composing. Creativity in writing grows from the ways writers handle these processes and establish their own goals. The methods used by good writers can be discovered (as the authors have done) and taught to novice writers.

Grossman, Stephen R., "Training Creativity and Creative Problem-Solving," *Training and Development Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 6, June 1982, pp. 62-68.

Provides suggestions for teachers and trainers of creativity and creative problem-solving skills that will make the training itself a good model of the skills being taught.

Hayes, John R., *Cognitive Psychology: Thinking and Creating*, Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1978.

A textbook providing a practical introduction to cognitive psychology. Two chapters discuss problem-solving and a third discusses creative acts as instances of problem-solving. Individuals can increase their creativity by increasing their knowledge, creating an appropriate atmosphere, and making more efficient use of their knowledge through analogy and brainstorming.

Hayes, John R., *The Complete Problem Solver*, Philadelphia: The Franklin Institute Press, 1981.

An introduction to the art of problem-solving that emphasizes practical applications. Presents effective strategies for a wide range of intellectual and practical tasks. Two chapters discuss creativity. Based on the author's problem-solving course at Carnegie-Mellon University. Contains many examples and exercises.

Hunt, Morton, *The Universe Within: A New Science Explores the Human Mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

A survey of cognitive psychology for a general audience, with emphasis on recent developments. Contains one chapter each on problem-solving and creativity, including a section "Creating Creativity."

Knapp, Joan T., "Teaching Creative Business Letters and Memos," in *Structuring for Success in the English Classroom: Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1981-1982*. ed, Candy Carter, Chair, and the NCTE Committee on Classroom Practices, Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1982, pp. 88-91.

Describes a series of sequenced, individualized assignments the author uses to "engage our students' imaginations" so that they will write effective business letters and memos.

Lewis, David and James Greene, *Thinking Better*, New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, 1982.

Presents a five-step program for more effective thinking. Includes material on problem-solving and on becoming a more creative thinker. Contains many examples and exercises.

Managing Creativity, Harvard Business Review Reprint Series, no. 11151, HBR Reprint Department.

This volume reprints 14 HBR articles examining the creative process in business, describing approaches and procedures that organizations have found helpful in stimulating innovation, and examining a variety of unusual problems and opportunities for creativity.

Moran, Michael W., "A Problem-Solving Heuristic," *Technical Communication*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 3rd Quarter 1982, p. 38.

A contribution to the regular feature "A Teaching Tip." Presents a system designed for technical and business writing that shows the writer how to approach and explore systematically any given problem. Provides teaching suggestions.

Perl, Sondra and Author Egendorf, "The Process of Creative Discovery: Theory, Research, and Implications for Teaching," in Donald McQuade, ed., *Linguistics, Stylistics, and the Teaching of Composition*, Studies in Contemporary Language No. 2, Akron, OH: University of Akron Department of English, 1979.

A study of the creative act from the point of view of "a new line of philosophical inquiry—the philosophy of experiencing." Uses a study of college students in the act of writing to show that writing is an act of "creative discovery" and that unskilled writers limit this discovery process by applying prematurely a "set of rigid, critical rules for editing." Concludes with suggestions about the proper role of the writing teacher.

Raudsepp, Eugene, "Trust That Hunch!" *Success*, August 1982, pp. 26-30.

Stresses the importance of intuitive thinking as opposed to "cold objectivity" as a problem-solving tool. Defines intuition and explains how to use intuitive thinking with examples from business. Provides a list of guidelines for awakening intuition.

Souder, W. E. and Ziegler, R. W., "A Review of Creativity and Problem Solving Techniques," *Research Management*, July 1977, pp. 34-42.

Presents a catalog of 20 operational techniques for stimulating the generation of creative ideas.

Taylor, David A., "How to Think Like a Scientist," *Science Digest*, August 1982, pp. 30-32.

An excerpt from Taylor's *Mind: The Human Difference* (1982) showing that rational thinking is "controlled imagination" involving both creativity and analysis, as well as playfulness. Explains, in this context, the process of induction, giving good examples for a general audience.

SMALL-GROUP DECISION MAKING

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Pat Pearson, Iowa State University
Phillip A. Sinclair, University of Toledo
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Mary S. Irwin, Wayne State University

In a survey which asked recent business graduates of a midwestern university to identify the strong and weak points of their education, a majority of students stated that they did not get enough background in communication politics.

This incident is not isolated. Graduates often feel that they are ill-prepared to deal with group dynamics and the politics of organizations.

Some people view an organization as a huge impersonal crowd. Some people would like to concentrate just on the individuals in the groups. In reality organizations are made up of many smaller groups which develop characteristics of their own that differ from the attributes of the individual group members.

Groups change and develop. Their dynamics depend on the size, composition, task, and environment. The more the members understand about the group dynamics, and the tasks of the individuals to maintain the group, the better the group will function.

Businesspeople work with other businesspeople. They are on committees and work teams. Their success depends on how well they work with others. As students go out into business, they need the skills to communicate effectively in groups. Their personal careers and the businesses they work for will be affected by how well they will master that task.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

To lower stress in group projects, to use meeting time efficiently, to save energy and tempers, and to raise individual and group productivity, students should learn how small groups make decisions. The time and purpose, composition of the group, facilities, member roles, participants' preparation, and probably procedure and goals of the meeting all affect a group's operation and eventual success.

As a group functions, channels of communication form between members, sometimes in straight lines, sometimes in wheels, chains, or branches. Group members who are well-informed are more effective and more satisfied.

Group members may improve, disrupt, or be neutral. Members may assist the group function by helping, giving rewards, joking, concurring, or by being understanding and accepting. They may disrupt by rejecting, refusing to help, showing tension or withdrawing, deflating others, or being defensive or antagonistic. They may be neutral by giving opinions or directions, analyzing, or asking for or giving information or suggestions or options.

Leaders may be strong leaders; they may focus on group needs, or they may try to avoid leading.¹ Effective group leaders plan beforehand, conduct the meeting efficiently and design steps for implementing decisions.

Planning Group Discussions

If a problem cannot be solved by individual memos, phone calls, or meetings, or if feedback or speed is necessary from a group, a meeting may be needed.

Meetings should have a purpose. The leader, at least, should be clear about the reason or reasons and, at the beginning of the meeting, state the purpose such as informing, motivating, problem solving, or decision making. The group may decide for itself in some cases what its purpose is.

Members need to know how long they will serve, and the power, size, and experience of the group. Ideally, group members are involved, responsible, trusting and caring, resourceful, attentive, and flexible. As the group functions, it develops norms that build unity and encourage conformity.

Meetings need to be planned. Convenient and regular meeting times and comfortable, well-equipped rooms improve the climates for meetings. Members may be assigned tasks before the meeting or elected to positions such as leader or recorder. Briefing members on agenda, roles, and goals will facilitate group action. The leader should anticipate what information will be needed and what issues and problems will arise. He or she has to work to assure open exchange of opinion, encourage participation and movement toward the goal.

Conducting Group Discussions

Meetings may be structured in many ways, depending on the leader's preference and the group's requirements. Information may be provided by an individual or panel, or a media presentation. Discussion may be unstructured or may follow an agenda.¹

Decisions may be reached impulsively or logically. Problem solving is efficient and satisfying, yet few students have problem-solving skills. Varied group techniques promote creativity, encourage discussion, and help assure understanding. Decisions may be made by consensus, by an individual such as the leader or a designated authority, by minority or majority vote, by consensus or by compromise.

Decisions may be routine, creative, or negotiative. Routine decisions are based on existing technologies or information on which the group agrees. Creative decisions lack appropriate technology, information, or strategy, so there is no agreement on solutions. Negotiated decisions are made between factions with differing norms, values, or vested interests or with differing ends, means, or both.

The problem can be examined in a series of steps:

1. Isolate and define the problem.
2. Analyze the causes of the problem; collect more data if needed.
3. Study the situation to determine whether there are patterns of repeating circumstances that cause problems and to consider what might be changed.
4. Define criteria for a solution.
5. Examine options. What are the possible solutions? What data support each?
6. Narrow the options to the best choice. Consider the probable results of each option, using the criteria, and gathering more data if necessary. Choose the option that yields the fewest negative and most positive consequences. Decide how to put the change into effect.
7. Experiment. Try the solution for a given time, continuing to gather data.
8. Evaluate. Using the criteria, judge how effective the solution is.
9. Continue, revise, or replace the solution. If the solution works, continue it. If it is partly effective, revise the ineffective part. If the solution is ineffective, try the second-best choice, or begin the problem-solving process again.

The following decision-making procedures are often used by professional or civic organizations.

1. Nominal groups individually list advantages and disadvantages of the topic; lists are pooled, and individuals rank the choices to create a master list for whole group discussions.
2. Delphi groups work alone; experts answer a questionnaire and then evaluate that questionnaire with all opinions indicated on it, to reach consensus.
3. Listening teams may be asked to listen carefully and record specific aspects of a complex presentation.
4. The two-column method, used to maintain objectivity in controversy, asks members to state why one position is better than another, quickly creating a two-column master list. Then the benefits of each and possible benefits are discussed.

Designing Implementation

After the group has reached a decision, it may be healthy for the group to reconsider the probable results of the decision and the risk involved. If members have silently disagreed, now they can speak up. Perceptions of consequences may change once the decision is reached.

When the decision is final, the plan for carrying it out is drawn up.

1. Decide when the job should be completed and how it should be evaluated.
2. List the steps to be taken to complete the task.
3. Decide the order in which to take the steps.
4. List the activities and resources needed to complete each step.
5. Estimate the time needed to complete each task, analyze which tasks can be concurrent, and determine a schedule. Assign workers to the tasks.

The plan needs to be evaluated. Group members should reconsider the criteria, determining whether items should be added, amended, or deleted, and whether the criteria are measurable.

Groups can be led or they can emphasize member involvement; they can focus on product or process. When group members respect and trust one another, when ideas can be shared and members can grow, the group will be effective.

Beginning business communication instructors can be models of effective communicators, participating, accepting feedback on their behavior, and expressing their feelings and insight so that students can learn to be even more effective group decision makers.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Small-group decision making should be part of a basic business communication class because effective communications can improve the final decision. To make effective decisions in a group, every participant has to understand the basics of group dynamics, importance of group maintenance, and the problem-solving process.

A unit on decision making in small groups should begin with an orientation to group theory, group dynamics, and group maintenance. Students also should be familiar with the basic principles of business communication before the unit starts. The unit will be more beneficial for a communications class if decision-making activities follow the orientation. An in-depth exploration of basic group characteristics through class activities would take too much time in a business communication class. Throughout the unit the instructor should relate communications and the decision-making process. Students do not study small groups *per se*. They explore the decision making in small groups in order to improve communications.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Most teachers who write about their experiences doing group work say that the teacher works hard but interest is high in a decision-making unit because the students seem motivated by the change and challenge.

To meet the demands for group and individual work, many teachers try varied activities such as simulation activities, field work, conference planning, round-table discussions, brainstorming, and other group work and strategies.

Simulation Activities

Most teachers who have tried simulation agree that it is effective only if preceded by ample classroom instruction in sound communication principles and that it should be only a small part of the semester's work. Alan P. Wunsch says that classroom instruction on communication principles, letters and memorandums, reports utilizing the problem-solving process, and human relations should precede any simulation applications.³

John T. Bale and Harold A. Coonrad start their report writing classes (divided into six groups) by distributing the information for a management game.⁴ The groups are to make decisions involving the kinds of variables that are common to almost any business firm (selling price of product, advertising budget, number of units to produce). After each group makes its decision, a computer print-out shows how each group compares to other competing teams. The students then determine what courses of action to take and then write a report to tell management what they plan to do.

Mark L. Knapp of Purdue University uses simulation to teach graduate students.⁵ He breaks his classes into several "companies" numbering about ten students. All companies work as consulting firms in communication and behavioral science. Company presidents are volunteers, but other employees have to write job application letters to the president. The presidents then select the employees who best fit the job situations. During the semester each company is responsible for several "products" (company journal, external house organ, research report on communication/training program, research report on the personality of an executive). Products go to every other company for evaluation, ranking, and scoring.

Field Work

To teach on-line data search along with the letter of evaluation of an employee, Peter J. McGuire divides the class into four groups.⁶ Each investigates an aspect of the problem and reports on its findings to the class. Group I reports on the number of available data bases and their contents, equipment needed to conduct a search and the cost of the search, the number of companies using this method, and the reasons companies prefer computerized searches to manual searches. Group II members discuss how they composed their list of key terms and how they select their data bases, while Group III selects and classifies the abstracts dealing with the context in which the letter of evaluation is written. Also Group III finds articles dealing with the legal and psychological aspects of letters of evaluation as well as the uses made of the letters within the corporation. Meanwhile Group IV selects abstracts which deal with the actual writing of the evaluation. They find information on the role of the written evaluation and the pitfalls (negativism, sexism, defensiveness, and over protectiveness).

Conference Planning

Pat Marcum says that during the middle one-third of the course the students work as four committees, each responsible for planning the content and presentation of a business conference which they then actually present orally.⁷ Each conference committee gives a written report, with copies distributed to the entire class. Also the committees answer questions and discuss their portion of the conference in an in-class, "staff meeting." The teacher (conference manager) meets with each committee, but the committees are ultimately responsible for their output.

Roundtable Discussions

Richard D. Rowell puts three or four students in a group and assigns each student to write an individual letter on an assigned case.⁸ The collected letters from each group then go to another group so that Group A's letters go to group B, group B's to group C, etc. Each group critiques each letter by writing comments on each one, rating the letters as mailable or nonmailable, and ranking them 1) best letter of group, 2) second best Rowell then selects a couple of letters rated number 1 and mailable and has each group identify why it rated the letter that way. To increase interaction among

all groups, he uses an opaque projector; and if time permits, he makes a transparency of the letters selected.

Brainstorming

According to William A. Damerst, brainstorming is not an undisciplined haphazard process.⁹ If the brainstorming session is to be most productive, it must meet some definite prerequisites: appropriate size of the group, ability of the leader to stimulate, adequate length of the session for the topic, and accuracy of the recorder. The ground rules must be observed. Participants must not criticize, and they must concentrate on producing *ideas*. Otherwise, the sessions will surely turn into meaningless bull sessions. Criteria must be determined and applied.

Other Group Work and Strategies

John Louis DiGaetani divides his classes into units of three with each person playing the roles of speaker, listener, and observer.¹⁰ The observer criticizes the effectiveness of the listener. Students write a short essay telling of their experiences and naming the role in which they feel most comfortable. DiGaetani also divides his class into groups of three and tells the students to maintain silence. But, someone talks first and so each group discusses such questions as why that person spoke first and why silence is difficult to endure. After these group discussions, one person will report the problems from each group.

For teaching oral communication, John Binnion and Edward G. Thomas approach group work from two standpoints: (1) as a means of discussion, case solution, and problem solving; and (2) as a means of presentation. Group presentation techniques used include panel discussions, symposia (similar to panel discussion but all members have a predefined topic which they address, with no interchange among participants as there is in a panel discussion).¹¹

We see that there are many and varied ways to teach small-group decision making through classroom activities. Essential to the success of such a unit is a thorough preparation of students in communication principles.

NOTES

1. Cassandra Book and Kathleen Galvin, *Instruction in and about Small Group Discussion*. Speech

Communication Association, Falls Church, VA, 1975.

2. David R. Siebold, "Making Meetings More Successful: Plans, Formats, and Procedures for Group Problem-Solving," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Summer 1979, pp. 3-20.

3. Alan P. Wunsch, "Simulation: A Realistic Approach to Business Communication," *The ABCA Bulletin*, March 1976, pp. 25-26.

4. John T. Bale and Harold A. Coonrad, "Simulation and Business Communication," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Spring 1970, pp. 5-12.

5. Mark L. Knapp, "Graduate Education in Organizational Communication: Wandering Through Utopia," *The ABCA Bulletin*, March 1972, pp. 4-9.

6. Peter J. McGuire, "The On-Line Literature Search in Business Writing Class," *The ABCA Bulletin*, June 1981, pp. 30-32.

7. Patricia J. Marcum, "My Favorite Assignment: A Conference Project for Report Writing Class," *The ABCA Bulletin*, September 1977, pp. 19-20.

8. Richard D. Rowell, "Group Dynamics and Letter Writing," *The ABCA Bulletin*, March 1975, pp. 24-26.

9. William Damerst, "Creativity in the Business Writing Course," *The ABCA Bulletin*, May 1967, pp. 5-9.

10. John Louis DiGaetani, "Teaching Listening Skills," *The ABCA Bulletin*, March 1980, p. 13.

11. John E. Binnion and Edward G. Thomas, "A Course in Oral Communication in Business," *The ABCA Bulletin*, March 1977, pp. 12-17.

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Blake, Robert R. and Jane S. Mouton. *The Managerial Grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing, 1964.

Each chapter on the five leadership styles on the grid contains a section on communication. The sections identify communication behaviors and activities associated with each leadership style.

Brown, Harry M. *Business Report Writing*. New York: Van Nostrand Company, 1980.

Chapter 6, Sharpening Your Thought Processes, treats well how the human mind thinks its way through facts, authority, evidence, opinions, and attitudes to come to a conclusion. Especially effective is the material on Problem Solving, pp. 158-160.

Cohen, Allan R., Stephen L. Fink, Herman Gadon, and Robin D. Willits, *Effective Behavior in Organizations*, Learning from the interplay of cases, concepts, and student experiences. Rev. Edition. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1980.

Decision-making model on pages 19-20, 25, 126, 127, is excellent information for classroom organization. Particularly effective are figures on pages 20, 27, 29, 31. Guidelines for Running a Meeting on pages 121 and 122 are worth noting. The text is nontechnical and easy to read.

Dawe, Jessamon and William Jackson Lord, Jr. *Functional Business Communication*. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

The authors have given valuable information about decisions and decision making. Pages 21-23; and pages 187-428 decision-making business reports have ideas for decision making. Page 266 has decision-making techniques for the yes-or-no problem.

Duncan, W. Jack. *Organizational Behavior*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1981.

The information on "Group Problem Solving," pages 199-210 is effective for further understanding the group in role playing.

Harrison, E. Frank. *The Managerial Decision-Making Process*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1975.

The entire text (342 pages) deals with decision making in every aspect. Its chapters on An Overview of Decision Making, The Nature of the Decision-Making Process, and Rational Decision Making are well done to provide excellent background information for teachers interested in the subject of decision making. It is an important text for teachers and students of management.

Himstreet, William C. and Wayne Murlin Baty, *Business Communications*, Seventh Edition, Boston: Kent Publishing Company, 1984.

A basic text in business communications adaptable to one- or two-term course. The text has the advantage of relating to a wider range of students. Page 334 identifies problem-solving steps.

Holcombe, Marya W. and Judith K. Stein. *Writing for Decision Makers: Memos and Reports with a Competitive Edge*. Belmont, CA: Lifetime Learning Publications, A division of Wadsworth, Inc., 1981.

The text shows how one can improve writing by applying the managerial skills one already has. The book is excellent in providing practical methods and strategies.

Huber, George P. *Managerial Decision Making*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980. (Paperback)

A basic-level book well written for managers and managers-to-be to help them improve their decisions and the decisions of their subordinates and associates as well. This book is about how to make decisions. Part One is exceptional in its treatment of an overview of decision making and problem solving.

Level, Dale A., Jr. and William P. Galle, Jr. *Business Communications Theory and Practice*. Dallas, TX: Business Publications, Inc., 1980.

Chapter 1 on fundamental dimensions of communication is worth examining for basic decision making. The text devotes itself to the fundamental principle that social organization without communication is impossible.

Luthans, Fred. *Organizational Behavior*, Third Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981.

Chapter 17 provides excellent information in understanding decision making and control. In addition, the chapter beginning on page 480 gives a thorough explanation of the decision-making process covering the nature, steps, scope, basic and routine decisions. The author also includes group techniques. At the end of the chapter there are two cases for class discussion.

Mathes, J. C. and Dwight W. Stevenson, *Designing Technical Reports*. Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1976.

A highly technical text and a resourceful one for teaching business communication. The following pages are useful for the problem-solving process: pp. 29-31; 32-36; 70, 196; 98, 102-107.

Miner, John B. *Theories of Organizational Behavior*. Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1980.

Chapter 13 gives excellent information on the decision tree and related types of leadership theories.

Mitchell, Terence R. *People in Organizations Understanding Their Behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978.

Chapter 11 on decision making is written in an interesting fashion giving full treatment to the subject including models and techniques. The author provides variables that might be important to the selection of a particular strategy.

Persing, Bobbye Sorrels. *Business Communication Dynamics*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1981.

Comprehensive and thorough for a basic communication course at the lower- or upper-division level and graduate level. Pages for decision making are 401, 409, 423, 432, 460-461, 463, 492, 502, 542.

Reitz, H. Joseph. *Behavior in Organizations*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1981.

Chapter 6 on individual decision making is simply written in an interesting style. It is nontechnical and the information is understandable. It is useful for a small group in decision making.

Rogers, Carl R. and F. J. Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August, 1952.

Still current, the article provides valuable description of the way barriers to communication operate in business. It is recommended reading for those who have just begun to think about identifying the reader.

Stoner, James A. F. *Management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1978.

Chapter 7 on decision making is excellent for teachers in teaching decision making in communication classes. Especially effective Victor H. Vroom's five steps of management decision styles on page 185. The author cites Vroom and Philip Yetton as developing a method to help

managers decide when and to what extent they should involve subordinates in solving a particular problem. It is easy to follow and is understandable.

Szilagyi, Andrew E., Jr. and Marc J. Wallace, Jr. *Organizational Behavior and Performance*. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1980.

Chapter 12, pages 401-442, is an excellent source for decision making and communication. The authors say that the single most critical ingredient in a decision is information. Those teaching small-group decision making will find positive and straightforward explanations easy to follow. Page 435 gives 5 applications and implications for the manager on decision making and communication.

Timm, Paul R. *Managerial Communication*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

Chapter 6, Interactional Communication Meetings and Conferences, is especially good for decision-making ideas. Phases of decision strategy are on pages 197-200.

Wren, Daniel A. and Dan Voich, Jr. *Principles of Management Process and Behavior*, Second Edition. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1976.

The following pages are resourceful for decision making: pages 87-89, 128-129, 159. Chapter 6 deals with aids to planning and decision making; it is a good explanation.

MICROCOMPUTER SOFTWARE

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The microcomputer has and will be an important tool in all aspects of society. Automobiles, industrial robots, appliances, and other machines use a microprocessor. Commercial video game centers and home video games are run by microprocessors. More and more microcomputers are becoming the standard communication device in the office. The ability to use microcomputer software packages may make the difference in failing or succeeding in the business office of the future.

The purpose of this unit is to provide the user with theory and principles, a suggested teaching unit, related classroom activities, sample laboratory activities, and selected references for further study. These materials will provide instructors with or without microcomputer hardware and software the necessary tools to teach, develop, and study integration of microcomputer software packages in business communication.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

James Peacock of the International Data Corporation reviewed various reports about the time-consuming role communications plays in management. One of the reports he quotes states that "the average manager . . . spends some 80 percent of his or her time in communication activities."¹ Given the current pace of business and the need for managers to make effective decisions quickly, the im-

portance of increasing the speed of the communication process becomes more evident. This fact is supported by John Connell when he states that "faster communications mean managers can stay on top of things and respond quickly to the unexpected."

In *SRA Business Education News*, Spring 1983, Richard Hatch discusses the responses of managers who have used word processors, and concludes that automation makes the writer's task easier for the following reasons:

1. Corrections are easier on a screen: recopying is unnecessary. Writers are more likely to outline and revise.
2. Writing with a word processor gives a steady progression from notes to outline to rough to final draft.
3. Because the screen can show corrections instantly, writers were more likely to make them; attractive documents are instantly rewarding.
4. Ability to make changes in margins, headings, tables of contents, and paragraph organization by reformatting makes the writer freer to experiment at any stage of the writing to produce the best possible document.
5. Automatic spelling, style, and grammar checkers help the writer perfect the communication; because checking is so quick and easy, it is more likely to be done. This system of checking will merely mark or tag some of the errors. The writer must then make the corrections.

6. Repeated messages are easy to duplicate. This may free the writer for more difficult tasks.

With the need to justify implementation of technology in an office environment, a more intense study of office costs is being conducted by many companies. Jim Dailey reports that "the true nature of the office revolution, if such it may be called, lies in the fact that we have become more aware of the office as a cost center."³

One of the major costs incurred in the office is that of paperwork. Nina Dunn has written that "while labor costs have been rising by a steady 8 percent annually, paperwork volume over the past 10 years has increased by 120 percent."⁴ Correspondence costs are a big portion of such costs. The basic time-related factors that must be considered when analyzing correspondence costs are:

1. Preparing and giving dictation, which covers the time required for jotting down notes, consulting records, conferring with others, and actually giving dictation. For the average length letter of 175 words, it is estimated that 10 minutes are required for preparation, and from 5 to 10 minutes for actual dictation.

2. Transcribing, which covers the work of the stenographer or the transcription machine operator. For the average length letter, the actual typing takes 15 to 20 minutes.

3. Reviewing and signing the average length letter takes 2 or more minutes.

In addition to these basic costs, there are the costs of stationery, supplies, mailing, filing, and general office overhead.⁵ The Dartnell Corporation estimates the cost of dictating, typing, mailing, and filing an average business letter in the United States to be \$7.11.⁶

The major contribution of this technology focuses on the enhanced ability to capture, revise, and store correspondence to avoid redundancy of effort. In looking at the previous factors included in generating a letter, a tremendous amount of the cost is labor. Thus, the time reduction in printing out an error-free copy using computerized technology is very significant. John Connell identifies the following areas as additional contributions of computerized technology:

Introducing computerization to text manipulation has given us the opportunity to examine traditional office processes and consider new approaches to improve office productivity. In the final analysis, the real significance of word processing is that it has helped define the optimum relationship between office machines and

office personnel in the quest to improve office productivity.⁷

Text processing using computer-based technology has had an impact in most offices. According to Connell,

Until the advent of word processing, we could only capture it with typewriters and printers. To manipulate means to redo. Word processing has changed all of this by introducing text manipulation.⁸

Certainly such trends in computerized office communication create conditions favorable to the integration of the microcomputer in teaching letter writing in a business communication class.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

The classroom unit should consist of a complete discussion of word processing: what it is, its main business applications, and how it fits in with other application programs. The topics should include current levels of uses of word processing in business, the differences between dedicated word processors and word processing programs on general purpose microcomputers, the main characteristics of word processing, interfacing of word processing programs to other programs, and word processing as a part of integrated software packages.

The laboratory unit to supplement this discussion could be done either as a group activity or individually, as required by the ratio of students to microcomputer systems. The activities center on three main procedures: a) editing an existing, flawed business letter; b) creating a new document, using limited page formatting; and c) using a spelling checking program with an existing document.

Timing

The classroom unit should require one hour of class time; each of the three laboratory units require approximately one-half hour per student.

Objectives

After completing the classroom unit, the students should know the role of word processing in business communications and the characteristics of word processing programs. If microcomputers and the word processing software are available, the students

should reinforce the classroom unit content with three laboratory units. After completing these laboratory units, the students will have had a hands-on experience with all the main functions of this important tool: input and editing, storage on and retrieval from disk, and output printing.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Current Use of Microcomputers in Business

In a recent Dun and Bradstreet survey of 5,000 companies, over one-third of all U.S. businesses reported using microcomputers. And for middle-sized businesses (between 20 and 99 employees) word processing is the main application. While it was reported that larger firms still use dedicated word processors, these are actually dedicated microcomputers (i.e., a general purpose machine has been "dedicated" to this one purpose), and the word processing programs are similar. In fact, many companies which sell dedicated word processors are now marketing systems which also allow some uses beyond word processing.

Characteristics of Word Processing Programs

Word processing is much more than a replacement of text preparation using a typewriter: it is a transformational environment for preparing letters and other documents. All word processing programs have three main characteristics/advantages. First, they provide for ease and economy in input and editing of text already entered. One can quickly insert, delete, and move characters, lines, paragraphs, or larger blocks of text. The search facility allows one to find specific word(s) within the text easily; the search and replace function allows for automatic expansion of keyboard abbreviations. The entire document is available for editing, since one can easily scroll (move) up and down through the text.

Second, the text is stored in machine-readable form on the disk. The text can be retrieved for further editing, for inclusion in other documents, or for data communications.

And, third, the output print formatting of the text is flexible, and can be done after or while the text is entered. The formatting variables include line spacing, margins (top, bottom, left, and right), right justification, paragraph indentation, boldface, and print size and type.

Interfacing with Other Programs

Word processing programs are commonly used with several other microcomputer programs. Probably the most common is the spelling checker programs: these programs check every word in a document against a dictionary of words and query the user of any word which does not match. Words so displayed can be tagged for correction or added to the dictionary.

Often word processing programs are used with a name and address maintenance program, so that "individualized" form letters can be generated by passing the name and address list (also used to print the address labels) against a form letter produced with the word processor.

Since the text generated using a word processing program is stored on disk, it is already in machine-readable form suitable for data communications. As electronic mail becomes more common, the ability to transfer text without retyping for data communications will be advantageous.

Word processing is a key program in any integrated software package, because it is desirable for business applications to imbed easily in a word processing document data generated using the popular financial spreadsheet and graphing programs. This again eliminates much unnecessary retyping of information.

LABORATORY UNITS

A minimum of three laboratory activities can supplement the classroom discussion. The following activities include instructions for WordStar on Morrow MicroDecision microcomputer systems, but the commands could easily be adapted for other systems.

The students will also need at least three sets of general instructions. They need the specific directions for printing out a document on the printer. They need instructions on how to use the special keys they may not have used before on typewriters, such as the CONTROL key. It will be especially important to emphasize that the RETURN key is used to end any unit of information such as a paragraph or a salutation, not the end of a line on the screen. And they will need a list of the main editing and saving commands, because most manuals are arranged as references rather than as tutorials which move from the simple, essential commands to the more difficult ones. A sample of these general instructions (for WordStar) follows:

Some WordStar Commands

Moving the Cursor

CTRL-E up one line
 CTRL-X down one line
 CTRL-A left one character
 CTRL-D right one character
 CTRL-A left one word
 CTRL-F right one word
 CTRL-QR beginning of file

Deleting

CTRL-G delete one character to right
 CTRL-T delete one word to right

Inserting

CTRL-V turn on/off insert mode
 (if insert is on, indication at top right of menu)

On-screen Formatting

CTRL-OC centers the line following the cursor

Saving Text

CTRL-KD saves the text in memory
 & exits editing mode

As discussed earlier, the laboratory units center on the main functions of any word processing program. The first unit requires the student to edit an existing letter according to set instructions. The second activity has the student create a new document; the text to be keyboarded, a memorandum, is given. This memorandum includes some lines to be centered, which will require the student to learn at least one output formatting command. The last activity involves the use of the spelling checker program; the instructions (using WordStar and Correct-it) for this activity are also included here. The students are given a text with misspelled words, so that while doing this exercise they can see that the checker program will not find all the spelling errors, and how it handles those it does find.

SUMMARY

After studying the theory and principles of this unit, one realizes the need for office automation. The microcomputer is a relatively inexpensive tool that, combined with the proper software, is and will continue to be an important part of the office. Business communication instructors need to expose students to microcomputer applications for preparing written materials. Students can use microcomputer software technology in report, memo, and letter preparation. This unit can be a starting

point from which the instructor can incorporate microcomputer software packages in a basic business communication course.

Laboratory Unit Exercise 1 Editing an Existing File

1. Get the microcomputer system started.
 - a. Turn on the CRT screen (square button on bottom right)
 - b. Turn on the computer (toggle switch on back, right-hand side)
 - c. Wait a few seconds. The computer will prompt you to insert a CP/M disk. Insert the WordStar disk provided in drive A.
 - d. Press the RETURN key.
2. WordStar will be loaded from the disk and automatically begin execution.
3. When the menu is at the top of the screen, press the D key to tell WordStar that you want to edit a document.
4. The computer will display: "Name of file to edit?" You type in SAMPLE.TXT and press RETURN. The file for you to correct will be loaded into the computer's memory.
5. Now you are ready to make changes. Use the commands listed in the previous column to move around in the text and to insert and delete. Make these changes in the text:
 - a. Insert the word "or" between "on" and before "in" in the first paragraph.
 - b. Delete the extra "be" in the second paragraph.
 - c. Correct the spelling of inconvenience in the third paragraph.
 - d. Put your name as the person writing the letter.
6. Now save the letter by typing Control K-D (hold down the CTRL key in the bottom left of the keyboard and at the same time press the K and then the D keys). This will save your corrected letter on the disk.
7. Use the instructions in the general instructions to print out the letter.

Laboratory Unit Exercise 2 Entering a New File

1. Get the microcomputer system started.
2. Get WordStar running.
3. Type D for document mode.
4. When the computer asks: "Name of file to edit," enter your initials as the file name (example: RWC).

5. The computer will display NEW FILE at the top of the edit screen. You are now ready to enter the following text. Remember that you should press RETURN only at the end of a paragraph or a heading, not at the end of each line on the screen.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, North Carolina
October 20, 1983

Subject: Student Advising

In the past, student advising has been handled by individual faculty members and by various administrative offices, such as Academic Advising. As a result, some students get conflicting information. Other students never see their advisors, and instead sign their own registration cards. Often, these students become seniors without taking required courses, and are then unable to graduate on time. Others take courses out of sequence, without the prerequisites required by the various departments.

Therefore, it will be our policy that certain procedures for preregistration be followed by all students:

1. All students will see their advisor, and obtain a signature and departmental stamp on their registration cards.
2. Next, each student will go to the centralized registration room. At that time students will be able to verify enrollment in the classes requested. If a class fills, they can either sign up for the waiting list or choose another class.
3. Students will turn in all their registration cards before leaving the registration room.

Dean J. Doe

4. After the text is entered, edit it for any mistakes, and then save the text on the disk (with CTRL-KD).
5. Print out the text you have entered.

Laboratory Unit Exercise 3 Using Correct-it to Check Text

1. Insert the CORRECT-IT disk in drive B.
2. Exit WordStar by typing X at the main menu (where you have been typing D and P).
3. You should see the prompt A> on the screen. Type in: B: and press RETURN to move to drive B.

4. You should now see the prompt B> on the screen. Type in: CORRECT and press RETURN. This will start the spelling checker program.
5. When you are prompted with: "Name of file to check?" enter this file name: MINUTES.TXT and press RETURN. The text will then be entered into the memory. When it is finished, pick option C to correct the file. Also, when asked, pick the W option for WordStar.
6. The CORRECT-IT program will pass through the text and display any words which do not match its dictionary. Change the words by entering the C option and then type in the corrected words. When you are asked about the spelling of "adjournment," use the option for checking the dictionary before changing it.
7. When you have finished with the correction program, get back to drive A by typing A: and pressing RETURN. Then get WordStar started by typing in WS and pressing return. Now you must edit the MINUTES.TXT file to take off any markers put in by the correction program and to correct anything not found by it (it does not find everything!).
8. When you have finished editing, save the file and then print it out.

NOTES

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7. John J. Connell, "Word Processing's Role in Today and Tomorrow's Office," *Management World*, April 1981, p. 1.
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Humphrey discusses the need for good writing techniques in business and the relationship between machines and the quality of authorship.

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This collection of essays covers the whole scope of the issues involved in using computers in teaching writing.

Levin, Robert and Claire Doyle. "The Microcomputer in the Writing/Reading/Study Lab." *T.H.E. Journal*. February 1983, pp. 77-79.

Describes the use of a word processor in essay courses at a community college to improve the reading/writing skills of verbally-weak students.

McComb, Gordon. "A Primer for Word Processing." *Creative Computing*. July 1981, pp. 84-91.

This article explains (with illustrations) the main features of word processors, such as right and left justification, imbedded commands, etc.

McWilliams, Peter. *The Word Processing Book: A Short Course in Computer Literacy*. Prelude Press, 1983.

This is an overview of word processing which is both entertaining and informative. In addition to the general discussion are sections on selection and purchase of hardware and software.

"Printers and Word Processing." *Creative Computing*. March 1983, pp. 12-89.

This special section of six articles contains advice on purchasing a printer. Included are 14 in-depth evaluations of new printers.

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An introductory book on microcomputer-based word processing. It includes not only a discussion of the characteristics of word processing but also some information on hardware selection.

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This introductory book is a particularly humorous and well-written discussion of microcomputer-based word processing aimed at a general audience.

BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS

STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Stress pervades every aspect of people's personal and professional lives. It can substantially affect their psychological and physiological well being. It can negatively affect their feelings about themselves, others, and the world around them. Stress affects one's thinking patterns, desire and ability to communicate with others, and ability to establish rewarding interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, the objectives of this unit are (1) to provide an overview of how stress affects people physically and mentally, (2) to develop understanding of how stress can interfere with one's ability to communicate effectively, (3) to offer a plan for teaching stress management in a classroom, (4) to suggest classroom activities and audiovisual aids that can be used to help students identify the causes and symptoms of stress and control the negative effects of stress, and (5) to supply resources that give additional information about stress.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

Stress is an elusive concept. Dr. Hans Selye, a well-known researcher in the field of stress, has defined stress as the nonspecific psychological and physiological response of the body to any new demand made on it. According to Dr. Selye, anything—pleasant or unpleasant—that interferes with the body's equilibrium is a stressor—a source of stress. Therefore, any change, positive or negative, evokes stress.

Each time the body encounters a stressor, it initially reacts with alarm—the primordial fight-or-flight response. The adrenal glands become enlarged and secrete adrenalin. The lymph glands, crucial to the immune system, shrink intensely. Respiration increases and adrenalin dilates the bronchi to allow maximum oxygen intake. The heart beats more rapidly, forcefully, and perhaps irregularly. Blood pressure rises, and more cholesterol is released into the bloodstream. Chemicals that cause blood to coagulate are also released into the bloodstream in case of injury. Blood is concentrated in the vital organs, lowering the skin temperature and leaving the extremities cool. Gastrointestinal functions decrease, and perspiration increases. The pupils of the eyes dilate to increase the field of vision. In fact, all the senses become more acute, and even brainwave patterns are altered.

Frequent or prolonged stress can cause complete physical or psychological collapse. When the fight-or-flight response becomes chronic, chemical changes occur in the body, leading to high blood pressure, an increased rate of arteriosclerosis, and depression of the immune system. In fact, half of all illness can be traced to stress. Stress is known to be a major contributor, either directly or indirectly, to heart disease, high blood pressure, cirrhosis of the liver, kidney disease, rheumatoid arthritis, lung ailments, cancer, colitis, peptic ulcers, obesity, sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, accidental injuries, and suicide.

It is impossible and undesirable to eliminate

stress from one's life. A certain amount of stress is positive and pleasurable. In fact, some stress helps people achieve their goals. It has long been known that a limited amount of stress enhances performance. However, it is also well known that excessive stress decreases performance efficiency sharply. To achieve peak performance, one must function under an optimal level of stress—neither too little nor too much.

But today we seem to be faced by a "stress epidemic." This epidemic is the result of pressures that have arisen as society evolved from rural to urban, from stationary to mobile, from self-sufficient to consuming, from isolated to interconnected, and from physically active to sedentary.

In the past, people could deal effectively with their stress because it was usually caused by specific identifiable stressors. Today, however, much stress results from ambiguous ongoing causes over which individuals have little or no control.

In today's high-pressure society, people are continuously exposed to excessive noise, overcrowding, interruptions, distractions, traffic, pollution, and general uncertainty. They are plagued by nagging fears about their personal safety, economic collapse, and nuclear destruction. In addition, many people subject themselves to self-inflicted stressors such as nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, drugs, improper diet, and inadequate exercise.

At work, many employees are assaulted by stressors with which they must learn to cope if they wish to remain employed. In communicating with others, employees must deal with autocratic superiors, uncooperative subordinates, belligerent coworkers, and demanding customers and clients. They must respond courteously to thoughtlessly worded memorandums, letters, and telephone calls. They must prepare vital reports on short notice and participate calmly in hastily called, poorly organized meetings. In general, employees must cope with conflicting demands on their time and constant interruptions that cause them to feel that they will never be able to meet important deadlines.

In today's society, many people are so continuously bombarded by stressors that they hardly have time to notice that they are living in a state of constant agitation. They are only vaguely aware of the causes of their tension or that they are functioning in a state of continuous overstress. They rarely, if ever, relax fully.

Continuous exposure to stress often produces symptoms such as:

- tension headaches
- heart palpitations

- high blood pressure
- pain in neck or lower back
- excessive perspiration
- lack of energy and fatigue
- insomnia
- excitation and hypermobility
- proneness to accidents
- increased susceptibility to colds and flu
- alcohol or drug addiction
- dryness of mouth and throat
- stuttering and other speech difficulties
- trembling and nervous tics
- grinding of the teeth
- loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- upset stomach
- indigestion
- intestinal disturbances
- weakness or dizziness
- irritability
- depression
- anxiety and emotional tension
- urge to avoid others
- feelings of disorientation and unreality
- feelings of helplessness and being out of control
- strong adverse feelings toward people or inanimate objects
- inappropriate crying
- inability to concentrate
- emotional instability
- impulsive behavior
- paranoia
- other neuroses and psychoses

Obviously, many of these symptoms can seriously impair one's ability to communicate; that is, to formulate thoughts, to transmit or receive oral and written messages, and to establish satisfactory interpersonal relations.

In attempting to control stress, it is important to realize that a stressful event for one person may not be at all stressful for another. It is the individual's reaction to a stressful event—not the event itself—that creates stress. How individuals respond to stressors depends on many factors, such as personality, heredity, age, sex, job and family pressures, diet, health, personal habits, attitudes, beliefs, and values.

Business communication teachers can help students lead more productive personal and professional lives by preparing them to communicate effectively in today's stress-ridden society. Students should be taught to recognize the causes and symptoms of stress, to realize the potential detrimental effects of stress, and to use stress-reduction techniques to cope with overstress.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Including a unit on stress control in a basic business communication course is appropriate and desirable as a means of helping students understand communication concepts and develop skill in managing their behavior patterns. A unit dealing with understanding and controlling stress can enable students to increase their knowledge of this elusive concept and to apply stress-management techniques in their personal and professional lives.

Topic Outline

- I. OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT
Students will learn:
 - A. To understand stress—its causes, and its effect
 - B. To manage stress
- II. ACTIVITIES
 - A. Introducing Stress Concepts
 1. Orienting students to stress
 2. Administering stress test
 - B. Understanding Stress
 1. Recognizing and analyzing the causes of stress
 2. Assessing the positive and negative effects of stress
 - C. Managing Stress
 1. Identifying stress management techniques
 2. Designing stress-reduction activities
 3. Applying stress-reduction techniques

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Classroom activities for teaching stress management can be divided into two areas: (1) activities which inform students about stress and increase their understanding of its potentially detrimental effects and (2) activities which help students implement stress-management techniques.

Introducing Stress Concepts

This teaching unit can be introduced effectively by showing the film *Managing Stress*.¹ The objectives of the film are (1) to explain that stress is an inescapable part of modern life, (2) to describe the common symptoms of stress and several stress-reduction techniques, and (3) to demonstrate the value of stress management.

In combination with the film, the teacher may want to use stress dots.² Though somewhat non-scientific, the use of stress dots will directly involve each student in the study of stress. Stress dots are based on the theory that stress tightens muscles and constricts arteries and blood vessels. Consequently, the flow of warm blood to the extremities is reduced. After introducing students to the subject, activities may be presented to help students understand how to manage stress.

Understanding Stress

Understanding stress is the first step in reducing its negative effects. The following activities should be used to give the students a working knowledge of what stress is and how it effects our lives.

1. Have students invite a panel of business leaders to class to discuss the effects of stress on communication in their businesses and explain what they do to cope with stressful situations.
2. Have students make lists of things that are "right" and "wrong" in their lives. Discuss the effect on communication when people accentuate the positives and eliminate the negatives.
3. Select teams to role play "stressful situations" which they have experienced or witnessed. Discuss the effects the situation had on communication, and suggest methods for improvement.
4. Have students keep a log or diary of events which they consider stressful. Have them describe how they responded to each situation and how they believe stress affected their communication.
5. Analyze how "information overload" has created increased stress in organizations, and explore methods to reduce this type of stress.
6. Have students complete the "Personal Stress and Organizational Stress Test" which can be ordered from: The Leadership Development Institute, Inc., P.O. Box 20172, Oklahoma City, OK 75156.

Managing Stress

Stress-management techniques should be taught after students have developed a thorough understanding of stress and its positive and negative effects. The following activities are useful in teaching these techniques.

1. Have students identify major sources of stress and stress-management techniques. Have them read a book related to a source of stress they feel. Ask students to practice some of the stress-management techniques and keep a record of results.

2. Have students brainstorm about what an organization can do to reduce stress among its members.

3. Have students design a stress-management program which could be implemented by a business or industry.

4. Discuss differences between managers who are "stress producers" and managers who are "stress relievers." Examine which type of manager is likely to be more effective with employees and why.

5. Have students collect and discuss stress-related motivational quotes; for example, "You're as happy as you make up your mind to be." (Abraham Lincoln)

6. Discuss effective ways to communicate with friends, relatives, employees, employers, and others who are under great stress.

7. Have students develop a list of lifestyle factors which can reduce the negative effects of stress.

8. Role-play and videotape hypothetical stressful situations which may occur in business or industry. Have students analyze the effects of stress on communication and determine how the situation may be improved.

9. Discuss both the positive and negative aspects of stress and how they affect communication. How can the positive aspects be increased and the negative aspects be decreased?

Teachers can improve their students' communication abilities by ensuring that they understand all the major barriers to communication—including stress. By incorporating the above activities in a business communication class, teachers can raise student awareness of the detrimental effects that stress may have on the communication process and help students to develop a repertoire of stress-management techniques that they can use in their personal and professional lives.

SUMMARY

Communication breakdowns frequently occur because of inappropriate reactions to stressful situations. To be successful in today's business world, employees and employers must use stress for positive rather than negative results.

Our mission as business communication teachers should be to instruct our students about the effects of stress on the communication process and to guide them in developing an effective stress-management program. Students should also be taught how to communicate with others who are under stress. This unit can help business communication teachers accomplish these goals.

NOTES

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"But Some Type 'A's Are More 'A' Than Other Type 'A's.'" *Training*, May 1983, pp. 82, 84.

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Choo, Frederick. "Type A Behavior—Coping With Stress." *Accountancy*, April 1983, pp. 128-129.

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"Coming to Grips With the Lethal Effects of Stress." Editorial in *International Management*, April 1984, p. 2.

Mentions a survey on stress-results which will be presented in a future issue. Points to the deleterious effects of stress.

Cornellian, Thomas. "Personal Success Is Only 10 Steps Away." *Data Management*, March 1983, pp. 30-34.

Views stress as a key to personal success rather than a negative force. Presents ways of using stress to achieve personal success. Concentrates on being successful by *using* stress.

"Fighting Stress? Find Harmony Through Goals." *Training*, November 1983, p. 88.

Discusses the use of goal-setting to reduce stress caused by conflicts between career and personal goals.

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Suggests that as managers decrease their stress, their employees' stress may increase. Lists and discusses sources of employee stress. Suggests ways to alleviate stress.

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Can be used personally or as a source for working with others. Includes materials on assertiveness, time management, and bio-feedback. Suggested readings at conclusion of each chapter.

French, John R. P. Jr., Robert D. Caplan, and R. Van Harrison. *The Mechanisms of Job Stress and Strain*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

Presents a research project and its findings about stress on the job. Contains complete methodology and extensive references.

Gowler, Dan and Karen Legge. *Managerial Stress*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975.

Published first in Britain. Contains a chapter on leadership styles in stressful situations and a bibliography at the end of each chapter.

Krohne, Heinz W. and Laux Lothar, Eds. *Achievement, Stress, and Anxiety*, Washington: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1982.

Contains chapters written by various authors with a section on coping and performance. Contains extensive references.

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Contains a series of 14 articles on burnout and stress. Contains an extensive bibliography including references to Selye's work.

Selye, Hans. *Selye's Guide to Stress Research*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1980.

Contains a synthesis of research with an extensive preface which reflects the thoughts of the "master" of stress research. Has detailed articles written by leading researchers in stress.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Today, many businesses, both large and small, are facing uncertain times because of technological change affecting them. This change, coupled with individuals who possess personal goals that may be different from the goals of others, as well as the goals of the organization itself, can cause conflict. Individuals who have the ability to recognize and deal with conflict in a positive way will provide their organization a valuable skill. Students need to develop this skill in order to be more effective in an organization.

Therefore, the objectives of this unit are to provide a fundamental overview of conflict resolution, to suggest a teaching plan to implement conflict resolution in a classroom, to recommend various classroom activities that illustrate conflict resolution techniques, and to furnish additional resources that may be reviewed for further information on conflict resolution.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

In any organization, varying degrees of conflict can be found among its personnel, its sections or divisions, its management, its customers and suppliers, and its policies, procedures, and systems. While conflict can be positively managed, it often is not.

Effective management of conflict is possible only when it is recognized as a constant and ordinary part of corporate life. Conflict resolution is

the result of using mature problem-solving techniques that deal with conflict as a positive source and requires the cooperation and skill of management to effect resolution. Conflict cannot be commanded away or paid off. It is really impossible to ignore. Conflict, properly managed, can be a constructive organizational force and should be treated as such.

Conflict can be defined as any situation in which the goals, methods, aims, or objectives of two or more parties are in opposition. It is also a situation in which potential solutions appear to be mutually exclusive. Conflict can arise any time decisions have to be made and can concern such topics as the allocation of scarce resources, performance standards, and ignorance or misunderstanding of another person's position.

The problem is not the elimination of conflict; rather, it is understanding the sources and types of conflict and learning how to cope with conflict in a way that minimizes the resulting stress upon the organization and its members. Kast and Rosenweig suggest the following four types of conflict associated with organizational roles: intrasender, inter-sender, inter-role, and person-role.¹

Intra- and Intersender Conflict. Intra- and intersender conflict are considered together because they concern messages sent to the receiver. Intrasender conflicts originate when the sender requests conflicting behavioral responses on the part of the receiver. An example of an intrasender conflict would be when a plant manager requests higher

unit production and, at the same time, issues a directive restricting the amount of overtime. The receiver may perceive this as an intrasender conflict because the response may be difficult to execute.

Intersender conflict comes about when a person receives messages from one or more sources calling for behavior responses that again may range from those that are merely incompatible to those that are mutually exclusive. The production worker urged by management to respond to an incentive system may also receive pressure from the peer group to restrict output. Likewise, a supervisor is often the "man in the middle" trying to respond to conflict requests from superiors and from subordinates.

Inter-Role Conflict. Since all organizational members belong to more than one group, each member experiences inter-role conflict in some degree. The demand for overtime hours, an organizational role expectation, may conflict with the time demands required by one's role as a family member. Simultaneous multiple roles within the same organization are also a source of conflict. For example, the multiple roles of committee leader and department head often result in conflict. Thus, inter-role conflict can spring from multiple roles within a single organization or as the result of being a member of two separate organizations.

Person-Role Conflict. The previously mentioned types of conflict describe situations in which the role is external in nature. There are situations when conflict arises as a result of conflicting internal and external roles. Internally perceived roles and their expectations are the result of a person's perceptions of self, code of ethics, and values. Externally imposed roles that require a violation of one's self-perception create person-role conflict. Being required to offer a kickback in order to obtain a sale is an example of this type of conflict.

Conflict and management go hand in hand. The word "conflict" suggests unproductive behavior, but conflict is not necessarily an organizational dysfunction. Creative conflict can result in better ideas and greater profit. Within an organization, properly managed conflict can help increase employee interest in activities and keep the staff aware of the corporate mission to serve its clients or customers.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Conflict is a natural occurrence in daily living that arises in personal relationships, in work or

business relationships, and in transactions with the general public. Conflict is stress producing but can be managed to produce positive rather than negative results. Communication skills determine to a great extent the ability to recognize conflict and both cope with and resolve conflict situations.

A unit on conflict resolution should enable the business student to become more aware of the dynamics producing conflict, to distinguish between positive and negative resolutions of conflict, and to be better prepared to resolve positively conflict situations which arise. The suggested time for this unit is two, 50-minute class periods.

Topic Outline

I. OBJECTIVES OF UNIT

Students will be able to:

- A. Recognize Conflict
- B. Understand the Sources and Types of Conflict
- C. Learn Effective Means of Handling Conflict
- D. Cope with Conflict in a Way that Minimizes Stress

II. FUNDAMENTALS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A. Definition of Conflict

1. Intra- and Intersender Conflict
2. Inter-Role Conflict
3. Person-Role Conflict

B. Types of Conflict Resolution

1. Confrontation—both sides are examined to reveal a wide choice of alternatives. Most desirable means of resolving conflict. Both sides partially win.
2. Compromise—both sides are shown although one side wins and the other loses.
3. Forcing—no solution is reached. One side is "forced" to meet the other.
4. Smoothing—conflict is recognized but no resolution is reached.
5. Withdrawal—ignoring conflict. No communication occurs. Least desirable type because there is no settlement.²

III. SIMULATED CONFLICT ACTIVITIES

IV. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activities designed to help students understand conflict resolution can be divided into two parts: (1) those to help students understand conflict and (2) those to help students learn to manage conflict.

To understand conflict, the teacher could have the students write a word for each letter in the word "conflict" which the students think describes conflict. Chances are many of the words chosen by the students will be negative. The class could then be asked to list positive results of conflict so that they could see that conflict is not necessarily negative.

Other discussion questions which could help students to understand conflict are:

- a. Why do students want to learn about conflict?
- b. With whom have students had conflict?
- c. How did conflict affect them?
- d. What influenced them the most when they were in conflict?
- e. What are the strengths and weaknesses of persons in conflict?
- f. What is the role of effective communications in conflict resolution?

To help students learn to manage conflict, one of the instruments used could be the Conflict Management Survey published by Jay Hall.³ This survey is designed to let students study themselves, and then interpret their scores to see how they handle themselves when conflict arises.

Simulating Real Conflict Situations. To make conflict situations more realistic to the students, have them analyze conflict situations in their own lives. Have them prepare a chart with the date and situation of the conflict, list the causes, tell what happened, describe how they felt, and discuss what they would like to have done. The students then analyze the situation to see what might have made the incident better.

An inventory can be kept of the individuals with whom each student comes in contact and with whom a conflict might arise. To help the students to think about these individuals, the instructor could make a list of these people, such as parents, brothers, sisters, friends, roommates, children, co-workers, employers, younger people, older people, strangers, etc. Have students keep an inventory of methods of handling conflict so they could check how frequently they use each method.

Role playing is an excellent activity to help in simulating a conflict situation. Students could put into practice the different methods of transactional analysis described in *Born to Win: Transactional*

Analysis with Gestalt Experiments⁴ and Games People Play.⁵ They could react first as a parent, then as a child, and finally as an adult in each situation. The audience could watch for other nonverbal clues that occur during the performance.

Playing Games, Listening to Cassettes, and Showing Films Related to Conflict Resolution. In addition to role playing, students enjoy playing the coin game. Students are instructed to bring a dollar in change to the next class. Participants are to write down traits that characterize themselves in their transactions with others before starting to play the game. Game time can run about 45 minutes and involve groups of six individuals.

The group of six sit together with their money in front of them. They are instructed to give as much as or as little money as they desire to other members. After a few minutes, they are to discuss what happened. Have players describe their own reaction to giving away their money.

For the next five minutes, players are to try to take as much money as they can from the other players. Questions to be raised at the end are:

1. Why did the players give their money to certain people rather than others?
2. How did they feel when they gave their money to others? when they got money from others?
3. How does their behavior in the game agree with the statements they wrote about themselves before starting to play the game?
4. How would they rate their own behavior?

A cassette tape program and manual are offered through the American Management Association, 135 West 50 Street, New York, NY 10020. This program, *Managing Conflict*, could be helpful to the instructor and students in learning more about four strategies for negotiating disagreement—(1) I Lose, You Win, (2) I Lose, You Lose, (3) I Win, You Lose, and (4) I Win, You Win.

Films also can be used to help in teaching conflict resolution. Two films are available from Thompson-Mitchell and Associates, 3384 Peachtree Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30326. First, a color film, *Talking out Conflict*, runs for 14 minutes and uses conflict between two tennis players to set the stage. Openness and honesty help to lay the groundwork for conflict resolution. Second, a two-part color film, *Conflict*, helps to develop awareness and understanding of the causes and consequences of interpersonal conflict. Part one runs 14 minutes, and it contains a case study of a design engineer and a production manager. Part two runs 20 minutes, and it gives an analysis of three ways to help resolve conflict.

SUMMARY

Conflict in any organization is inevitable; however, conflict, if managed properly, can be dealt with positively. Individuals need to understand the various types of conflict associated with organizational roles, such as intrasender, intersender, interrole, and person-role. Also, individuals need a basic understanding of the types of conflict resolution—confrontation, compromise, forcing, smoothing, and withdrawal. Thus, by being aware of the types of conflict and by implementing ways to resolve conflict, individuals will be able to mediate conflict situations and reduce tensions.

Business communication instructors can help students develop effective interpersonal skills in the classroom. Through the use of the suggested activities in this teaching plan, as well as reviewing the various references in the bibliography, instructors will be able to provide their students a valuable tool that can be used when they become employed.

NOTES

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Analysis of game playing in everyday life. Motives for such games, their effects on relationships, and methods for dealing with these games are discussed.

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Transactional analysis as applied to everyday life. Behavior, personality theory, and interpersonal relationships are emphasized. Gestalt experiments provide basis for conclusions.

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Provides teachers with effective methods of dealing with conflict in the classroom. Includes such aspects as role playing, gaming, games and exercises, simulations, and films which teachers may use to resolve classroom conflict.

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Concerns the effective management of conflict through the realization that conflict is inevitable and, when dealt with, constructive. Provides managers with effective methods of dealing with conflict realistically.

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An analysis of forms and patterns of conflict in today's world. Examines the science of conflict, conflict as a discipline, and its function in social systems.

Weider-Hatfield, Deborah, "MIC: Interpersonal Conflict Through a Win-Win Approach," Richard C. Huseman, James M. Lahiff, and John D. Hatfield, eds. *Readings in Business Communication*, Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1981.

Identifies five different styles of conflict management, including confrontation, competition, compromise, accommodation, and avoidance. Centers around the confrontation style, using the Managing Interpersonal Conflict (MIC) Technique as an instrument of satisfactory resolution to all parties involved.

ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

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Since this is an interdependent world in which one must rely on others to obtain even the basic necessities, it appears axiomatic that any behavior that improves one's ability to express clearly his or her ideas, feelings, and needs and enhances one's interpersonal skills is desirable. Through responsible assertive behavior, people are able to develop mutually rewarding interpersonal relationships; foster their own personal and professional development; and, therefore, make valuable social and professional contributions.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

Assertiveness theory is based upon the belief that being able to express one's ideas, feelings, and needs effectively strengthens one's self-image and increases his or her ability to function socially and professionally.

The goal of assertive behavior is to enable individuals to speak up for their rights without disregarding those of others. Acting assertively can help people gain control of their behavior—be less shy and more expressive without being aggressive or hostile. Therefore, assertive behavior increases opportunities to develop mature, satisfying, mutually beneficial interpersonal relationships.

Assertiveness may be defined as behavior which enables one to defend his or her rights without violating those of others. The alternatives to assertive

behavior are nonassertive behavior (relinquishing one's right in deference to those of others) or aggressive behavior (exalting one's rights at the expense of those of others). Neither nonassertive nor aggressive behavior is desirable in establishing sound interpersonal relationships.

When communicating with assertive people, one knows where he or she stands because assertive people are able to say what is on their minds—they are not evasive. However, asserting oneself does not mean one can say or do anything to anybody under the guise of being "open" or "honest." Mature assertive behavior requires responsibility for one's actions.

Effective assertive behavior necessitates not only respect for one's own beliefs and values but also genuine, empathetic concern for those of others. Because assertive people believe all individuals have equal rights to express themselves honestly, they demonstrate respect for others as well as for themselves. Therefore, assertive behavior increases people's self-esteem, leads to the development of mutual respect, and helps people achieve their goals without sacrificing those of others.

Assertive behavior does not guarantee that individuals always get their own way. One can still be assertive by doing something one does not want to do if another wants it badly enough. However, it is unassertive to do something someone else wants if one is resentful about it. The assertive person attempts to find a balance between being so con-

cerned about others that they neglect their own needs and so egocentric that they neglect the needs of others.

Assertive people are able to listen to criticism from others, evaluate the appropriateness of the criticism, and then negotiate desirable changes in behavior. While *aggressive* behavior sacrifices the rights of one individual so another can win, *assertive* behavior focuses not on winning but on negotiating reasonable, mutually beneficial behavioral changes in order to equalize the balance of social power.

Assertive behavior minimizes chances of hurting, accusing, or alienating others. Making one's needs known and taking responsibility for one's actions decreases the tendency to blame or retaliate against others when one's needs are not met. The ultimate objective of assertive behavior is developing mature, caring, honest, accepting relationships with others.

Effective assertive behavior can only be achieved through thorough understanding of and sincere belief in the following assertive principles:

1. Individuals have the right to act in ways that promote their dignity and self-respect provided they do not violate the rights of others.

2. Individuals have the right to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs and to be treated with respect.

3. By honestly expressing their thoughts, feelings, and needs, individuals gain self-respect and respect from others.

4. When individuals share their true thoughts and feelings with others and encourage others to share their thoughts and feelings with them, interpersonal relationships become more authentic and satisfying.

5. When individuals express their honest feelings and thoughts in appropriate ways, everyone involved benefits.

6. By frequently sacrificing their rights, individuals teach others to take advantage of them.

7. By attempting to live so that they *never* cause others hurt or inconvenience, individuals ultimately injure themselves as well as others.

8. When individuals attempt to control others with hostility, intimidation, or guilt, interpersonal relationships are damaged.

9. Individuals have the right to say "no" and do not feel guilty.

10. By telling others how their behavior affects them, individuals demonstrate respect for others' rights to know where they stand and give others opportunities to change their behavior if they desire.

11. When individuals refuse to tell others their thoughts and feelings, they are inconsiderate—just as inconsiderate as if they refused to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others.

Understanding assertiveness theory and adhering to assertiveness principles can help anyone develop more successful interpersonal relationships on the job and in their personal lives. Through assertive behavior, individuals have opportunities to express themselves in a manner that is both personally satisfying and socially effective in preventing or resolving interpersonal problems. Therefore, everyone benefits from responsible assertive behavior.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Assertive training brings added dimension to communication classes by enhancing self-expression and by contributing to self-actualization. Assertive training helps both passive and aggressive people behave assertively and, therefore, has dynamic impact upon the development of effective personal and professional relationships.

Including assertive training in basic business communication classes is appropriate because assertive training is inextricably involved in improving communication skills. Assertive training can enhance verbal and nonverbal communication skills. The following unit presents a topic outline and classroom activities for teaching assertive behavior in a basic business communication class.

Topic Outline

I. Fundamentals of Assertive Behavior

A. Definition of Assertive Behavior

1. Assertive Behavior versus Aggressive Behavior

2. Assertive Behavior versus Nonassertive Behavior

B. Assertive Principles

II. Classroom Activities, Methods and Training Procedures

A. Behavioral Objectives

B. Assessment of Behavior Patterns

C. Determination of Differences Among Nonassertive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior

D. Identification of Basic Assertive Rights and Their Limitations

E. The Significance of Body Language

F. The DESC Script

Classroom Activities

This section describes activities and assignments designed to help students acquire information and develop assertive skills. It includes discussion of methods and training procedures. The activities and discussion focus on major topics presented in the preceding outline.

Behavioral Objectives

Behavioral objectives help ensure that training follows an orderly process and that teachers and students attain their goals. The following assertive behavior objectives can be achieved in a basic business communication class. Students will be able to:

1. Recognize differences among assertive, aggressive, and nonassertive styles of behavior.
2. Discover their behavior patterns through an assertive inventory test.
3. Recognize the limits of basic assertive rights.
4. Develop strategies for coping with human feelings and reactions.
5. Become effective listeners.
6. Express wants and feelings and negotiate conflicts.
7. Cope with others' aggressions.
8. Initiate, conduct, and terminate conversations by writing and rehearsing assertive scripts.
9. Recognize basic types of assertive behavior.
10. Appreciate the importance of nonverbal behavior in communicating with others.

This list of objectives can be modified to fit the needs of the group. Ample student involvement in goal setting is extremely desirable.

Assessment of Behavior Patterns

The initial step in becoming assertive is determining one's present level of assertiveness and how one reacts to mildly threatening situations. To help students determine their assertiveness level, the teacher can use several available inventories. For example, Bower and Bower offer a series of worksheets on which students can rate behavior frequencies on a scale of 1 to 5 and compare their total scores with suggested norms. Scores of 1, 2, and 3 indicate weak behaviors which need strengthening.¹

Another self-assessment inventory is the Gambrill-Richey Assertion Inventory.² A scale of 1 to 5 indicates the degree of emotional agitation (anger, anxiety, guilt, fear) one experiences in given situations. Students take the test twice—the first time to rate emotional agitation and the second time to determine the likelihood of acting as described if actually faced with the situations.³

The Assertive Data Collection Package Recording Form with a rating scale of 0 to 4 may also be used.⁴ This package contains other useful forms: for example, The Subjective Units of Discomfort Diary, an Assertive Goal Scale, and a Homework Diary.

If the group is small enough, the teacher may also use interviews to determine student problems in communicating and expressing feelings. Lieberman et al. suggest helping each student specify the "where, when, how, what, and with whom" of problem situations.⁵ Cotler and Guerra provide a detailed explanation of assessment interviews.⁶

Because of time and skills required, the assessment interview is recommended for classroom instruction only when the group is small (4 to 15 students) and the instructor is a skilled interviewer. In addition to using an inventory test, the teacher should gather all available student information and should informally observe students' oral communication to detect situations or behaviors that assertive training can improve.

After administering and evaluating the results of the assertiveness inventory test, the teacher helps students set class goals and orients them to (1) differences among aggressive, nonassertive, and assertive styles of behavior; (2) basic assertive rights and their limitations; (3) effects of nonverbal cues on verbal messages; and (4) assertive script-writing techniques.

Determination of Differences Among Nonassertive, Assertive, and Aggressive Behavior

To help students understand differences among nonassertive, assertive, and aggressive styles of behavior, the instructor should provide clear descriptions of these behaviors. Each type of behavior can be demonstrated by using charts similar to those contained in Lieberman et al.⁷ or Jakubowski.⁸ Students can analyze model situations and identify types of behavior demonstrated. Jakubowski's discrimination tests are ideal for this purpose.⁹ Two of these tests describe situations and responses, and students are required to identify the behavior illustrated. A key is provided, and the test is easy to score. Osborn and Harris provide a list of terms describing submissive, assertive, and hostile behavior which is also useful during the orientation process.¹⁰

Identification of Basic Assertive Rights and Their Limitations

Accepting one's assertive rights is vitally important to becoming assertive. While increasing student

awareness of personal rights and responsibilities, two concepts should be stressed: (1) exercising one's rights is not a license to act any way one wants with total disregard for others, and (2) accepting one's rights creates personal power which entails responsibility.¹¹

The overview of personal rights and responsibilities should include discussion of the most common assertive rights. Herman's model for becoming assertive provides exercises to help students identify personal rights.¹² These exercises require students to list their basic rights or to analyze a situation after which they are required to answer specific questions.

The Significance of Body Language

The significance of body language should be emphasized because nonverbal messages either reinforce or detract from verbal messages. Training to become assertive and personally effective should include instruction in the proper use of eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and voice tone and volume. These nonverbal cues strengthen verbal messages only when they are congruent, and congruence is achieved only through practice. Therefore, proper body language should be stressed in each assertive training activity.¹³ (See Herman's model cited earlier.)

The DESC Script

The DESC Script is an effective approach to assertive training that can be used to give students opportunities to practice assertiveness in real-life situations.¹⁴ The following discussion explains the DESC Script and describes classroom exercises.

The DESC script is a four-step outline which helps students write assertive scripts dealing with their personal problems. The acronym represents four key words—DESCRIBE, EXPRESS, SPECIFY, and CONSEQUENCES. DESC scripts help one describe behavior objectively and concretely to others. Emphasis is placed on expressing feelings about behaviors, specifying desired changes, and identifying positive or negative consequences of such changes.

In teaching assertiveness, the DESC script has several advantages. First, writing scripts forces students to plan ways to change their behavior or their aggressor's behavior. Second, the script provides support and increases one's self-assurance. Third, script writing sharpens one's planning skills.¹⁵

Before having students write their own DESC scripts, the instructor should define the four-word acronym precisely—DESCRIBE, EXPRESS, SPECI-

FY, CONSEQUENCES—and give examples of good and bad scripts.

In step one, DESCRIBE, students precisely delineate objectionable behavior. Students use concrete, image-building words to describe objectively their aggressor's behavior. They specify time, place, and frequency of action. They avoid accusations, gestures, and inferring motives.

In step two, EXPRESS, students reveal their thoughts and feelings about the offender's behavior. Positive rather than negative approaches should be used in expressing feelings. Students are encouraged to remain calm and to direct their comments to the offending behavior, not to the offender's entire character. The instructor should give examples of both negative and positive approaches to expressing thoughts and feelings. For example, negative expressions like "I hate you when you do that" should be replaced with positive, goal-oriented statements like "I think your behavior and my reaction to it are preventing us from having a pleasant relationship." This step helps students rid their vocabularies of overused, hackneyed expressions like "hate," "resent," "miserable," "angry," and "frustrated," which are counterproductive.¹⁶

In step three, SPECIFY, students request clearly the desired behavior change. Their requests should be reasonable. In some instances, both persons may have to make changes or compromises.

In step four, CONSEQUENCES, students outline contractual agreements for behavior changes and delineate concretely and clearly the rewards or penalties involved in abiding by or violating the contract.¹⁷

Social rewards should be stressed. For example, showing affection, approval, or appreciation by touching, hugging, kissing, or making complimentary remarks about another's appearance, intelligence, or personality are a few of numerous ways in which one can socially reward others.

Social penalties include criticizing another; showing indifference or boredom; going against another's wishes; devaluing something or someone another likes; making insulting remarks; and attacking, ridiculing, or humiliating another. Social penalties should be used only when rewards fail. If penalties are included in the contract, they must be realistic and stated explicitly. Students should be aware that social penalties can produce undesirable side effects.

The script should focus only on the issue at hand. Achieving small positive steps is more realistic than asking for too much at one time. To establish attainable goals, it is best to keep in mind one's immediate needs and those of others.

The script should close with an expression of sincere appreciation and suggestions for future assertive resolutions. The desire to have a more positive relationship and the intent to keep one's part of the contract should be emphasized.

Practice in writing DESC scripts: Students should begin their study of assertive script writing by analyzing sample scripts.¹⁸ Bower and Bower provide sample scripts with which students can practice before attempting to write their own scripts.¹⁹ Bower and Bower also provide a chart of DESC script "do's and don't's" which can be used to help students identify script-writing violations.²⁰

For script-writing practice, the teacher should provide commercially-prepared or instructor-prepared problems. Students should analyze these problems using forms²¹ and guidelines²² similar to those shown in Bower and Bower before writing practice scripts.

After students are thoroughly familiar with assertive script-writing techniques, they should be encouraged to apply these techniques to the solution of their own interpersonal problems. The class can serve as a sounding board and provide suggestions for improvement before students use their scripts in real-life situations.

SUMMARY

Assertive behavior may be defined as behavior which enables one to defend his or her rights without violating those of others. Responsible assertive behavior increases one's self-esteem, leads to the development of mutual respect, and helps one achieve his or her goals without sacrificing those of others. The ultimate objective of assertive behavior is developing mature, caring, honest, accepting relationships with others.

Including assertive training in basic business communication classes is appropriate because assertive training is inextricably involved in improving communication skills. Understanding assertiveness theory and adhering to assertiveness principles helps students develop effective interpersonal communication skills vital to their personal and professional development. Assertive training also enhances verbal and nonverbal communication skills and listening skills.

Learning principles used in teaching other skills can be used in teaching assertive behavior. Establishing behavioral objectives helps ensure that training follows an orderly process and that teachers and students attain their goals. Ample student

involvement in goal setting is extremely desirable; and behavioral objectives should be modified, according to the results of an assertiveness inventory test, to fit the needs of the class.

Numerous exercises for teaching assertiveness have been published (see bibliography), and the DESC script is one that can be adapted easily for classroom use. Before attempting to teach this unit on assertive behavior, instructors should acquaint themselves thoroughly with assertiveness principles and exercises by reading several of the self-training books cited in the bibliography.

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Butler, Pamela E. *Self-Assertion for Women: A Guide to Becoming Androgynous*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1976.

Provides good cartoons and gives an excellent treatise on nonverbal assertive behavior.

Cotler, Sherwin B., and Julio J. Guerra. *Assertion Training: A Humanistic-Behavioral Guide to Self-Dignity*. Champaign, IL: Research Press Company, 1976.

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HUMOR

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Until recently many businesspeople questioned the usefulness of humor and its appropriateness in the workplace. They seemed to indicate that humor and business did not mix. This view, however, has changed and humor is beginning to be recognized as an important tool for managers. Today, humor can be used to share messages, to relieve stress, and to relay interest. It can be used to great effect in public speaking. The skillful use of humor can attract audience attention, put both the audience and the speaker at ease, create empathy for the speaker, and make a specific point. Individuals who can develop a good appreciation of humor will possess an important trait which will contribute to their personal and organizational success.

Therefore, the objectives of this unit are to provide an overview of humor in various business settings, to furnish a teaching plan as an aide to incorporate humor in a classroom, to offer various classroom activities to reinforce basic principles of humor, and to recommend additional resources for further information on humor.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

One of the major problems in discussing humor is in first defining the term. We know what is funny to us, but this perception is a highly individual one, and we cannot assume that other people will share our perception. Humor has been defined as

"a defense against life's vexations and woes,"¹ "a reaction to the incongruities of life,"² and a "tension reliever."³ Although Freud observed that "humor has in it a liberating element,"⁴ he considered humor to be simultaneously the "epitome of maturity and the denial of reality."⁵ Because humor is an emotional activity, there is no one correct way to define it, any more than there would be to define love, or sorrow, or anger. But regardless of the definition, humor is an important part of interpersonal communication.

Managers can use humor to defuse tense situations and to help employees cope with difficulties that arise in the work place. Researchers have proposed an anxiety reduction theory of humor, with the level of humor arousal directly associated with the anxiety level of the subject.⁶ Humor is a coping mechanism which can be effectively used to reduce the anxieties of modern life.

Humor can also be used to develop an *esprit de corps*, a sense of "oneness" in an organization. Malone relates an incident where a skillfully integrated joke, appropriate to the situation, changed a group of adversaries into a team with a revitalized common cause.⁷

The effect of humor on memory and retention, and the usefulness of humor as a tool in persuasion, are not easily agreed upon. In these two areas, conflicting research results have been found. Much of the problem in this research is attributable to poor methodology. There are some advocates of humor. Lammers feels that humorous appeals are indeed

more persuasive than nonhumorous ones when adequate time is allowed for humor-persuasion effects to take hold.⁸ There is need for future research efforts in this area, and experiments should be designed to more closely resemble conditions in the "real world"; i.e., using clearly defined, generalizable measurement systems, and taking into account human peculiarities when interpreting human behavior.

Humor should always be fresh, it should be appropriate, and it should not be offensive. Above all, humor should be used in moderation. The suggested teaching unit which follows is designed to give students practical experience in using humor as a communications tool.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

A business communication course could use one fifty-minute period to explore the ramifications of humor in the business world. Students should become sensitized to the effect of humor on others as well as on themselves.

Presenting Humor in the Basic Business Communication Course

I. Objectives of Unit

Students will be able to:

- A. Understand how humor can be used effectively in the business world.
- B. Recognize that not all individuals may perceive humor in the same way.
- C. Find value in humor as a tension reliever in an individual setting as well as in a group setting.

II. Fundamentals of Humor

- A. Define humor as it is understood in business.
- B. Humor can be a tension reliever to achieve a more healthy business climate.
- C. Humor can put more meaning into life in the business world.
- D. Humor can be most effective if properly handled in public speaking.
- E. Humor can produce maturity in working relationships once all participants learn to accept this.
- F. The use of humor in the business place needs more research since conflicting results have been reported in areas of memory retention and persuasion.

III. Activities (suggested in the next section)

IV. Evaluation

One method of evaluation would be to watch how a student handles humor in oral presentations and in classroom group activities. Most of the evaluation would be subjective.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Humor is a subject which need not be limited to a specific day or two in the classroom. Humor can be spread throughout the entire basic business communication course. However, the structure of this unit allows the instructor to provide an overview of humor in one class period.

Sentences taken from letters of policyholders who are explaining their claims for automobile insurance, letters received by the welfare department, excerpts from retail credit reports, excuses written by parents to teachers, and mistakes found in church newsletters are some sources that can be used to introduce humor in the basic business communication course on the first day of class. Students can take hope that they surely can write better than any of these rather humorous examples by the time they have finished the course.

The newspapers are full of cartoons which can be used to illustrate breakdown in communications. Some of the cartoon strips which can be used are Peanuts, Shoe, Hagar the Horrible, Hi and Lois, Cathy, The Born Loser, Sally Forth, etc. Single picture cartoons appear daily in *The Wall Street Journal* as well as other newsstand periodicals. Put in the form of overhead transparencies, these can be used throughout the course to illustrate communication principles. Before making transparencies, however, write for permission from the copyright holder.

Other types of creative items with humorous intent can be used as end-of-the-period type of activities. These include puzzles, anagrams, mind-expanding word association exercises, etc. Get the students involved in locating humorous items. One may be surprised how many items they can find that relate to various parts of the course.

When one thinks of humor, a natural reaction is to think of a joke. One classroom activity, which might be used to show that there are no universal jokes which everyone understands and likes, would be for a class to rate 30 jokes from 1 (not funny at all) to 5 (very funny). This would be similar to the humor survey which *Psychology Today* made in June 1978. After all students rated the jokes, class

time would be used to compare student reactions to individual items. This activity would show the wide variety of reactions to jokes and humor. The survey could contain jokes in the following categories and could be tailored to meet any individual situation: Silly, Word Play, Family and Social Stratification, Business, Economy, Politics, Medicine, Eccentric Traits, etc. The sources of these jokes could come from a wide variety of periodicals, such as *Journal of Communication*, *Psychology Today*, *Modern Maturity*, *Readers Digest*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Current Comedy*, etc.

Because business communications are not primarily planned with humor in mind, the dangers of the receiver taking personal offense at humor must be kept in mind. The class discussion from a series of jokes would help to show that humor must be delicately handled. Introducing humor brings up the importance of knowing the audience to which one is sending a communication. One should remember to never use humor at the expense of a member of the audience. Although some individuals might consider a joke directed toward someone in the audience as funny, others might become embarrassed. If this situation occurs, the credibility of the speaker can be effected.

The discussion should mention that humor can be a stress and tension reliever, that it can create a positive image, and that it oftentimes gets the message across very quickly. The effective teacher will help the student to see that humor must be used judiciously in both written and spoken communication in business.

SUMMARY

The use of humor can add an important dimension to one's managerial skills. Humor can enhance one's presentations and create good feelings in the work environment. However, there are some principles to follow when using humor as a communication tool. With the structure of the business communication class, instructors can provide their students with a framework, through classroom activities, of those principles that will aid in their appreciation of humor. By using this unit, instructors will be able to incorporate a segment that not only the students but also the instructors themselves will enjoy.

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Discusses the advertising use of the *double entendre* and puns.

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"Some Employers Say Humor Relations Is No Laughing Matter: Have You Heard the One about . . .?" *Savings Institutions*, Vol. 104, No. 7, July 1983, pp. 122-123.

Provides, from the "humor relations" consulting work of Charles Lindner, numerous instances of the beneficial effects of humor in the workplace. Also states a fear, based on research, that today's junior executives "display considerably diminished senses of humor."

Robin, William J. "Did You Hear the One about . . ." *Telephony*, Vol. 202, No. 16, 19 April 1982, pp. 142, 144, 146.

Encourages salespeople to develop a repertoire of anecdotes and stories and to listen for "memory triggers," points in conversations where the salesperson can insert "That reminds me of . . ." and proceed with a story introducing a sales pitch.

INTERPERSONAL FACTORS

LISTENING

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Ineffective listening costs American business billions of dollars annually. Because of poor listening, letters have to be retyped; appointments have to be rescheduled; shipments have to be reshipped; individuals and organizations are unable to understand and respond to customers' and clients' real needs; employees feel ignored, disgruntled, and ultimately alienated from management; ideas are distorted by as much as 80 percent as they travel through communication channels; unnecessary conflicts disrupt operations and decrease production; and entire organizations are manipulated by propaganda techniques.

The list of problems caused by ineffective listening is endless, and the exact cost of poor listening is incalculable. If listening is to be improved, concerned people must make themselves heard in the silence that surrounds the subject.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

Effective oral communication requires a partnership between speaker and listener. Listening is an indispensable part of oral communication. Yet most conversation consists of one person talking too much and the other listening too little. Sometimes it seems that conversation is 90 percent talking and 10 percent listening.

Prove it to yourself. The next time you attend a meeting, watch the participants fidget as they wait

for a pause in the oratory so they themselves can jump in. Instead of listening to what is being said to them, many people are busy listening to what they are going to say. Listen to how many times the same point is made by different people and how many irrelevant or repeat questions are asked. Meetings in which the participants are poor listeners usually result in too many mouths putting too few ideas into too many ears.

Poor listeners are not half as fond of listening as they are of talking. In fact, they generally conduct conversations as if they were contests in which the first person to draw a breath is declared the listener. The problem, of course, is that poor listeners are conditioned to equate talking with power. They do not seem to realize that the person who is able to *listen* carefully, *understand* thoroughly, *evaluate* logically, and *react* intelligently is the one who possesses the real power.

Of the four communication skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—listening is by far the most frequently used. Research reveals that the average person spends approximately 70 percent of his or her waking hours communicating and that approximately 45 percent of that time is spent listening—while only 30 percent is spent speaking, 16 percent reading, and 9 percent writing. In school, students spend as much as 60 or 70 percent of their time listening; and in business, listening is frequently cited as the most critical communication skill.

Although listening is the communication skill most used, it is the least taught. In fact, listening is almost never taught in school. It is small wonder that most people are poor listeners since our listening habits are not the result of training but the result of lack of training. Research indicates that immediately after listening to a 10-minute presentation, the average person has heard, understood, correctly evaluated, and retained only about 50 percent of what was said and that within 48 hours the average retention rate decreases dramatically to only 25 percent.

Effective listening requires that listeners: (1) consciously exert effort in listening; (2) resist distractions; (3) take an interest in what the speaker is saying; (4) exercise their minds by not avoiding difficult material; (5) judge content, not delivery or mannerisms; (6) listen for central themes, not isolated facts; (7) maintain open minds; (8) defer evaluation of the speaker's remarks until comprehension is complete; (9) be flexible and selective in notetaking; and (10) capitalize on their thought speed.

Poor listeners squander the advantage of thought speed by daydreaming. Good listeners know that the average person speaks about 125 words a minute while the average listener can mentally process information at about four or five times that rate. They do not squander this thinking advantage but use it to summarize mentally what has been said, anticipate what will be said next, listen between the lines, understand the nature of the arguments offered, separate fact from opinion, weigh evidence presented, identify fallacies in reasoning, and draw proper inferences.

Good listeners also know that listening has a visual component since nonverbal factors contribute between 55 and 80 percent of message meaning. They realize that if one wants to hear everything he or she must keep both eyes open.

Listening instruction can accomplish four major objectives: (1) increase understanding of the nature of listening and its importance in the total communication process, (2) diagnose listening abilities and practices, (3) develop skills and techniques to improve listening effectiveness, and (4) create awareness of the importance of effective listening to personal and professional success. In the few schools which have instituted listening instruction, students' listening comprehension has as much as doubled in just a few months. Listening instruction increases retention, promotes critical thinking, and facilitates learning. The ancient adage still rings true today: "The beginning of wisdom is silence. The second state is listening."

TOPIC OUTLINE

- I. Objectives of Unit
 - A. To increase awareness of oneself as a communicator.
 - B. To develop skills in listening and self-expression.
 - C. To learn concepts of effective interpersonal communication.
- II. Fundamentals of Active Listening
 - A. Assessment of Listening Abilities
 1. Administering tests
 2. Scoring
 3. Developing goals and norms
 4. Discussing results
 - B. Definition of Active Listening
 1. Listening to nonverbal behavior
 2. Listening to the quality of the speaker's voice
 3. Listening to words
 4. Listening to nonverbal behavior, voice, and words
- III. Activities for Building Listening Skills
- IV. Summary

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Instructional activities in listening can be classified into areas: (1) those devised to help students diagnose their listening abilities, (2) those designed to help students understand active listening, and (3) those developed to help students build better listening skills.

Fundamentals of Active Listening

Assessment of Listening Skills

To demonstrate the need for listening improvement, administer a simple listening test. A very useful instrument for this purpose is the Jones-Mohr Listening Test published by University Associates. This tape-assisted test, complete with manual and two test forms, is designed to provide feedback about listening efficiency and measure the effect of listening skill building. This test can easily be used with other instructional components, such as structured experiences and lecture materials.¹

Vining and Yrle provide another useful listening test.² This test uses a 10-item questionnaire with a rating scale to evaluate student listening effectiveness. After taking this test, student participants

total their points and classify themselves as excellent (32 or more), better-than-average (27-31), in need of improvement (22-26), or in need of much improvement (21-below). Raw scores can be converted to "percent accuracy" scores by dividing each by the number of items on the test.

To provide feedback, the teacher can tally the scores on the chalkboard using the above ranges. (Since some students hesitate to reveal their true scores by show of hands, scores may be written on slips of paper.) To stimulate discussion, the teacher should indicate the evaluative meaning of the ranges. As a result of the discussion, the class should generate goals to be accomplished.

The test tape can be replayed to discuss particular items. The group can diagnose its own functioning in terms of its ability to understand emotional states and to share information effectively.³ They should assess the entire experience in terms of barriers to effective listening. Nichol's ten barriers to effective listening is useful in this discussion.⁴

Students can determine how much time they devote to listening by keeping a log of their communication activities for one day. They can compare the amount of time spent in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.⁵

Bonnie Phillips suggests having student partners read passages aloud to each other. After the student listens to the passage, the reader asks several questions based on the passage. This same procedure can be used following short lectures to determine what facts and understanding students have acquired.⁶

Definition of Active Listening

To help students understand active listening which includes paying attention to the speaker's nonverbal behavior, voice, and words, the teacher can give a 15-minute lecture on what is termed the "third ear" or listening for the meanings behind words.⁷

Activities to Build Listening Skills

Immediately following the lecture on understanding active listening, have students get acquainted. Pfeiffer and Jones do this by dividing students into triads separated from one another to avoid noise interference. Triad participants label themselves A, B, or C. Participant A takes three minutes to tell the other two persons about himself/herself. Then B and C take two minutes to tell A what they heard. The process is repeated until each person in the triad has had this experience. This activity can

be modified by having all three persons tell about themselves before responding. Or, the listeners can be assigned different tasks—one can listen or paraphrase while the other listens and draws inferences.⁸

Gerard Fagan has participants give two or three meanings for items on a list of nonverbal or voice-related behaviors. The list includes things such as people nodding their heads up and down, smiling slightly, or wringing their hands.⁹ The teacher can use transparencies to show pictures of nonverbal behavior having students comment on the meaning behind each behavior.

To help students become more aware of themselves and the person to whom they are talking, divide them into pairs and have them sit facing each other. Each student takes a turn saying a single sentence to the other, each time beginning with the words "Right now I am aware that ..." ¹⁰ Each student finishes the sentence by making an observation about the nonverbal or voice-related behavior of his/her partner, about himself/herself, or about his/her feelings. For example, A says, "Right now I am aware that you are leaning toward me"; B says, "Right now I am aware that you are sitting on the edge of your chair." ¹¹ This exercise requires about five minutes. After the conversation, each person shares how he or she felt during the exercise, discusses awareness, and comments on closeness feelings toward each other.

Teachers can use more traditional classroom activities to teach some listening skills. For example, they can ask students to list experiences involving distractions during lectures and suggest how these distractions can be overcome. Or, they can tape historical passages, speeches, or humorous materials; and after playing the tape, have students answer questions to ascertain their listening effectiveness. These questions may require recalling facts, identifying emotions, or discerning intended meanings.

Lilian O. Feinberg says that using listening teams is especially effective with large classes. Prior to listening to a presentation such as a guest lecture, subgroups are formed and assigned particular listening tasks. One group may be asked to listen for the causes of the problem, another for the solutions suggested, and a third for the consequences of each solution. Each group is given time to codify its recollections before the class convenes to discuss the problem. Cueing the class to the fact that they will be asked to recollect and restate facts, express implied meanings, recall nonverbal behavior, and so forth, improves their ability to attend, comprehend, and recall messages.¹²

Supplementary Teaching Aids

Recognizing the seriousness of poor listening skills, a number of business firms have instituted training programs to improve these skills. Some of these programs can be obtained directly from the company for a fee. One such program, "Strategies for Effective Listening," is available from Xerox Learning Systems, One Pickwick Plaza, Greenwich, CT 06830. This program includes active and interactive listening. It is a four-hour program using a combination of programmed instruction, audio tapes, and group discussion. A teacher's manual is provided.

Films are also useful supplementary aids in teaching listening skills. McGraw-Hill, Inc., Post Office Box 641, Del Mar, CA 22014-9988 offers three color films on listening: (1) "The Power of Listening" demonstrates how improved productivity results from learning the "how-to" of active listening. (2) "Verbal Communication" depicts organizational life and dissects verbal communication into its four basic elements—the speaker, language, atmosphere, and listener. (3) "Listen to Communicate" emphasizes the importance of effective communication and provides an in-depth view of the vital role played by active listening in interpersonal and managerial success.

SUMMARY

Problems generated by ineffective listening are endless. The exact annual cost to American business of ineffective listening is undeterminable.

Listening is an essential part of oral communication. Of the four communication skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—listening is by far the most frequently used. Although it is the most used, it is the least taught. Research indicates that the average listener retains only about 50 percent of what is heard immediately following a 10-minute presentation and that within 48 hours the average retention rate declines dramatically to only 25 percent.

Most people can improve their listening skills through systematic and conscientious practice. Effective listening practice requires listeners to listen actively, resist distractions, become interested in the speaker, discipline their minds, judge content, listen for central ideas, isolate facts, avoid prejudgments, be flexible and selective in notetaking, and capitalize on their thought speed.

Listening can be taught. Researchers and practi-

tioners have achieved positive results in their efforts to improve listening skills. Varied instructional techniques should be used. These techniques include assessing listeners' skills with commercially produced or teacher-prepared rating instruments, listening teams, student logs, brief encounters, and films. Films and tape recordings can be used alone or in conjunction with other learning activities. Additional teaching methods and techniques are summarized in the attached annotated bibliography.

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Begins by chiding managers for evaluating seminars less critically than other types of employee-development programs. Continues by describing how data-processing managers can contribute to more effective seminars by emphasizing listening objectives and strategies and by properly evaluating the results of each seminar.

Clutterbuck, David, "How Sperry Made People Listen," *International Management*, Vol. 26, No. 2, February, 1981, pp. 20-21, 23.

International Management's Senior Editor David Clutterbuck joined a course for Sperry employees. This course has affected a number of significant changes; e.g., 75 percent of the participants from the company's engineering division developed a more favorable attitude toward listening.

DiGaetani, John Louis, Kenneth F. Thompson, and Delmont J. Kennedy, "Sperry Corporation and Listening: An Interview," *Business Horizons*, Vol. 25, No. 2, March-April, 1982, pp. 34-39.

An interview with two top-level Sperry Corporation managers summarizes the development of Sperry's employee listening training program and discusses the techniques, problems, and successes in implementing the program.

Dunk, William P. and Richard R. Mau, "Sperry Explains Why It Listens," *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2nd Quarter, 1982, pp. 12-15.

An interview with Richard R. Mau, vice-president of corporate and government relations for Sperry, "the company that listens." Mau emphasizes the need for a corporate-wide listening strategy and describes the seminars and publications which Sperry uses to implement its listening strategy. Concludes with a self-evaluation of Sperry's success in implementing the program with managers and employees.

Gottlieb, William, "Hey Out There—Are You Listening?" *Business Quarterly* (University of Western Ontario), Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer, 1981, p. 80.

A brief compendium of advice provided by three listening consultants. Recommends that good listening involves the following rules: (1) don't judge, (2) pay attention, (3) express your feelings, and (4) slow down the conversation.

Harris, Thomas E., "Understanding Listener Reception," *Supervision*, Vol. 44, February, 1982, pp. 6-7.

Identifies seven types of "nonlistening": pseudo-listening, stage hogging, selective listening, insulated listening, defensive listening, ambushing, and insensitive listening.

Hayes, James L., "Are You Listening?" *Industrial Security*, Vol. 25, May, 1981, p. 21; also published in a slightly different form as "Are You Really Listening?" *Restaurant Business*, Vol. 80, May 1, 1981, pp. 126, 128.

A synopsis of the desirable and undesirable characteristics of a supervisor's listening behavior from the subordinate's perspective. Concentrates on techniques of "nondirective listening"—the process of obtaining as much information as possible from the speaker.

Kolgraf, Ron, "You're Not Listening!" *Industrial Distribution*, Vol. 71, March, 1981, p. 65.

An interesting and readable introduction to the effects of poor listening and the need for concentrating on listening skills.

Levelt, William J. M. and Stephanie Kelter, "Surface Form and Memory in Question Answering," *Cognitive Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January, 1982, pp. 78-106.

A statistical article summarizing six experiments conducted with Dutch respondents. The research indicates that speakers tend to format the syntax of their responses on the basis of the syntax of the question heard. The conversational consequence of this behavior is that listeners may unwittingly pattern their answers to fit a mold which distorts verisimilitude to actual feelings.

Montgomery, Robert L., "Are You a Good Listener?" *Nation's Business*, Vol. 69, No. 10, October, 1981, pp. 65-66, 68.

Condensed from the author's book *Listening*

Made Easy, this article presents six basic guidelines for better listening: Look at the other person, ask questions, don't interrupt, don't change the subject, check your emotions, and be a responsive listener.

Powell, Jon T., "Listening to Help the Hostile Employee," *Supervisory Management*, Vol. 26, No. 1, November, 1981, pp. 2-5.

Contains helpful comments on what a supervisor can do to ease the unpleasantness of handling an irate employee. The discussion is organized around three concerns: creating the right atmosphere, listening to learn, and reacting constructively.

Rochester, Jack B. and John Louis DiGaetani, "Managerial Communication: Total Business Communication for the 1980s," *The ABCA Bulletin*, Vol. 44, No. 3, September 1981, pp. 9-10.

Concerns, in part, the results of a survey on writing, speaking, listening, and reading. Contains five references.

Steil, Lyman K., "Listen Up!" *Real Estate Today*, Vol. 15, February, 1982, pp. 12-17.

Discusses listening skills with particular reference to sales. Contains a list of "Ten Keys to Effective Listening" and a self-test to help a salesperson evaluate his or her listening skills.

Wycoff, Edgar B., "Communication Goes Unnoticed—Until It Fails," *IABC News*, Vol. 11, No. 9, April, 1982, p. 17.

"Good communication is that something provided to avoid bad communication." With that comment, Wycoff proceeds to explain that managers can describe the effects of communication but not communication itself. He proposes analysis of communication into first and second communicative acts, to counteract what he views as being the most severe communication problem—unmet expectations. Proper listening is critical in preventing miscommunication.

Books

(List contains only books published between 1979 and 1981)

Erlich, Howard S., *Teaching Speech Communication*

in College Content Courses, U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 197 406, November, 1980.

Describes a study to test a method of instruction designed to incorporate communication and reasoning skills into the content of liberal arts courses. Among these skills were speaking and listening. Two results were that speaking objectives largely mirrored those of writing and that listening objectives were frequently inherent in the speaking objectives.

Fritz, Paul, et al., *Teaching Listening Competencies to Physicians: Introduction to Tracking Behavior*, U. S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 193 709, November 1980.

Describes listening deficiencies of physicians. Recommends a communication course in medical colleges that (1) increases the physician's interviewing competencies, (2) reduces feelings of threat, and (3) equips the physician with techniques that allow the patient to solve the dilemmas that infuse the interview.

Gurry, Joanne M., *Oral Communication Skills: Classroom Diagnosis and Follow-up; Evaluating Listening Skills*, U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 210 725, November 1981.

Describes the use of tasks that structure speaking and listening behaviors so that participants need to interact to achieve accurate comprehension to evaluate students' comprehension and listening skills. Includes listening checklists and a list of references.

Montgomery, Robert L., *Listening Made Easy: How to Improve Listening on the Job, at Home, and in the Community*. New York: AMACOM, 1981. 134 pp.

A beginner's description of (1) the importance of listening for happiness and success and (2) principles and rules that increase listening ability. Includes several humorous descriptions of hypothetical listeners with names such as Dan Daydreamer, Finicky Fran, and Freddie Faker.

Rulun, Rebecca B., *Assessment of College-Level Speaking and Listening Skills*, U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 208 032, April, 1981.

Describes the state of the art in college-level competency testing. To correct speaking and listening deficiencies, the Communication Competency Assessment Instrument is proposed. Suggestions are given for using the instrument's results.

Smith, Virgil Dempsy. "An Investigation of the Aural Cloze Procedure as a Measure of Listening Comprehension." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1980.

Gives results of an investigation of the aural cloze procedure as a measure of listening comprehension. Selected results are: (1) students were more successful when responding to the written cloze procedure; (2) the aural and written cloze procedures were affected in a similar manner by the external variables of readability and content;

and (3) the aural and written cloze testing procedures were reliable and equitable measures of comprehension abilities.

Vella, Jane Kathryn, *Learning to Listen: A Guide to Methods of Adult Nonformal Education*, U.S. Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document 186 680, 1979.

Describes ways of listening to a group or community, approaches to sharing rather than transmitting, and methods of problem-posing education. Particularly describes how to conduct and analyze a listening survey that is designed to identify themes, problems, or issues that will most effectively lead the community to meaningful action for personal and social development. Mostly based on author's experiences in Tanzania.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Nonverbal communication has been in existence since the first one-celled animal waved its body at the second one-celled animal. Only within the last 20 to 30 years has this form of communication appeared in literature as a succinct area of study. In the business world, the ability to communicate verbally one-to-one, one-to-small group, and one-to-large group may determine one's success. Since nonverbal and verbal communications are part of the whole, students need exposure to nonverbal activities.

The purpose of this unit is to provide the user with theory and principles, a suggested teaching unit, related classroom activities, and selected references for further study. With the materials provided in the unit, instructors will have a basis by which they can teach, develop, and study nonverbal communication.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

The study of nonverbal communication is still young, and the topic is complex. Thus, the terminology differs among authors, and much remains to be learned and clarified. Increasing popular interest reflects the concern of management for improved oral, as well as written communication; and this interest is justified by the improving research. While college students know intuitively how to read friends, teachers, and parents, con-

scious awareness of the nonverbal messages they send and receive will aid them in coping more successfully with superior-subordinate relationships they will encounter. Thus, instructors in a basic business communication class need to present nonverbal as well as verbal communication theory to their students.

Nonverbal communication works with verbal communication by substituting for, repeating, emphasizing, or complementing (or contradicting) it. A listener may regulate communication by leaning forward to encourage the talk to continue or closing a notebook to discourage the speaker. Not all movement is nonverbal communication. If the sender intends the movement to convey a message, if the receiver and sender agree that the movement has a socially shared meaning, if the sender is conscious of the message, and if feedback is received, it may be classified as communication. Clearly, definitions vary; what the sender intends may be quite different from what the receiver interprets.

Nonverbal communication is generally considered to include kinesics, or body, including facial, movement; paralinguistics, or voice variation; proxemics, or space relationships; and artifacts, or dress and other appearance. Writers sometimes include haptics, or touching; olfactory, or smell; and environment. These areas are sometimes grouped as visual, such as kinesics, proxemics, and artifacts; auditory; and invisible, such as tactile, olfactory and telepathic.

The external environment, the subjective states of the interactants, and the relationships of the communicators all affect communication, verbal or nonverbal. Communication is more open with friends, less open in formal situations. Because mood is important, a rub on the nose may mean dislike or irritation, or simply an itchy nose. Nonverbal cues will be different between lovers or friends than between superior and subordinate. While professionals in nonverbal communication are careful to qualify their statements, popular writers and students are sometimes quick to decide, on the basis of too little evidence, that some element of the communication has one meaning only.

Burgoon and Saine discuss basic approaches to nonverbal communication: body language, ethological, linguistic, psychoanalytic, physiological, and functional.¹ The body language approach assumes that correct interpretation of nonverbal messages would increase understanding, that nonverbal messages are more authentic, have specific meanings, are uniform, and have sexual motives. This approach is theoretical, does not distinguish between motivations, and is ambiguous. The ethological approach assumes that humans have evolved, and that nonverbal predates verbal, are innate, response patterns that are not specific to a species. The cultural and intellectual bases of nonverbal communication are disregarded. The structural linguistic approach sees nonverbals as social, informational and integrational, continuous, ongoing, meaningful, and socially determined. The meaning-centered linguistic approach assumes that behavior is based on emotion and specific channels; the rules that underlie these behaviors are ill-defined.

The psychological approach assumes that behavior is due to the communicator's psychological state, past, or abnormally. Attempts to construct standards for normal behavior are lacking. The physiological approach assumes that sensory organs screen information or that neurophysiological processes account for differences between verbal and nonverbal behavior; psychological and social elements are denied. The functional approach assumes that the particular communication function determines the nonverbal communication. The context is interpersonal, the communication is ongoing, initiated to achieve a function. One nonverbal code may serve many functions or one function may involve several codes or coordinated codes. Immediate causes take precedence over original causes. This approach does not reveal prevailing over isolated functions. Students and instructors may need to determine the theories of the writers they study.

Differences in communication determined by sex are discussed by Eakins and Eakins, who discuss the limiting factors of roles, provide examples, activities, and suggestions for change.²

Nonverbal cues may be used to manipulate personal relationships, sales, or even interrogation. Danziger discusses ways salespeople use nonverbals, ways customers can resist, and implications and problems of manipulation.³ Burgoon and Saine also discuss manipulation, pointing out that positive reinforcement, such as eye contact, smiles and nods, is more likely to improve comprehension, and that nonverbal cues can improve or distract from comprehension.⁴ Mini-experiments and photographs in the book would be useful in the classroom.

Writers believe that through nonverbal messages, the sender can convey affiliation, positive regard, interest, dominance, credibility, or status; can reinforce or punish, affect what others learn, what attitudes develop, what approaches will be modeled, and what is expected. Students need a conscious awareness of the potential of this powerful communication.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Nonverbal elements—that is, any communication outside the written or spoken word—play an important part in human communication. Just how important, the experts differ. Noted anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell estimates that they account for 65 percent of what gets communicated;⁵ another respected scholar, Albert Mehrabian, estimates 93 percent.⁶

You may find these percentages—or, indeed, the idea of percentages to describe communication—somewhat ludicrous. Clearly, many of the claims about nonverbal communication are oversimplified and useless, such as “crossed arms always indicate a closed personality.” Nonverbal communication, of course, never has a single definite meaning, is never isolated from the rest of the communication, varies among cultures, and is not a magic key to success in business.⁷

Even so, the understanding and improvement of nonverbal skills are essential for business students. Such training will help them to communicate more clearly—or, if you prefer, “encode messages” more effectively. It will also help them to be more sensitive to what other people really mean, or “decode messages.” At the very least, it will make them aware of another dimension of communication.

Timing

The amount of time used for this unit varies widely. The unit might be as short as a one-day class discussion, with or without student exercises. It could be a month-long short course, or it could be a long-term research course. However, the amount of time devoted to this topic in the basic course should be at least two or three sessions.

Objectives

The objectives of a unit on nonverbal communication could range from increasing awareness to conducting research. The three objectives below parallel the three sets of learning activities outlined in the next section. Depending, then, on how much time you wish to spend on the unit, the students will be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of and understand the theoretical background of nonverbal communication.
2. Learn to send and receive ("encode and decode") nonverbal signs more effectively.
3. Conduct research on the subject.

Content

Regardless of how long faculty spend teaching the course, most of them include some or all of the following content areas:

1. Introduction to the importance of nonverbal communication.
2. Types of nonverbal communication
 - A. Body language (including "kinesics," or body motion, as well as posture, gestures, eye contact, and facial expression)
 - B. Voice ("paralanguage" or "paralinguistics")
 - C. Spatial relationships (including "proxemics" as well as concepts of territory)
 - D. Appearance, artifacts, and environment ("indicators")
 - E. Others (including touch, music, body shape, taste, and smell)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The objectives and content can be achieved by (1) a class listening to a verbal presentation (the lecturer speaking and writing items or even an outline on a blackboard) on French Impressionism, (2) the lecturer employing 35mm slides or vugraphs

(overhead projection transparencies) along with his or her verbal commentary, and (3) the class looking at, say, an exhibit of the original works of the Impressionists in the downtown Museum of Art. These effects can be achieved through a variety of classroom activities. This unit considered audio-visual activity, more specifically: films and videotapes.

Films and videotapes offer live action through which many aspects of a communication matrix can be effectively demonstrated. Visually depicted actors-in-situations that reflect the more complete reality of the actual work to the less-often considered communicative nuances produced by dress, posture, facial expression, eye movement, "body language," color, perspective, and many other factors seldom considered a part of the total communication matrix. These factors, however, are generally ignored because the usual unidimensional textbook with its prose instructions and problems-for-papers approach is itself as cardboard as are the exercises about a made-up ABC Company or Acme, Inc.

Film and video also offer the audience insight into other parts of the communication matrix, through special effects, music, and other sound effects. While it is true, as Sax Rohmer once declared, that "there is no incidental music to the dramas of real life," the use of music and sound effective for enhancing messages cannot be dismissed without consideration. At the very least, students viewing films and video presentations will be intellectually addressing the critical rightness (or wrongness!) of such augmentation to the "communication value" of a situation. Such learning has the same kind of carry-over effect as with any other kind of reinforcement.

Take, for example, the Paul Newman-narrated film, "A Year Toward Tomorrow," which won an Oscar as the Best Documentary short at the 39th Annual Awards ceremony. Detailing and describing two different VISTA work-sites—a poverty-stricken Navajo reservation in Arizona and a slum section of Atlanta, Georgia—this film carries so many messages involving communicative effectiveness that it could very well be a part of the classroom activities. But the film—without intending to, for it is *not* a film made for communication classroom use—clearly shows how much of communication depends upon so very many other facts that just "knowing how" the outsider versus the insider, whether in an ethnic cultural milieu or in business, requires the patient, sometimes frustrating building of a sense of trust and respect. That is not a subject easily

taught in lectures. It cannot be gleaned from a textbook. Yet without that kind of message all the textbooks and all the workshops and all the lectures in how and what to write, or what format in which to frame a report, go for naught.

Film is an excellent instructional and public relations medium, and the communications classroom ought seriously to be involved in an exploration of this developing means of conveying information. In the area of such emerging technologies as CAD/CAM, such public relations documents as the HICAS System of C. Itoh, Ltd., which offers an introduction to Japanese computerized shipbuilding manufacturing, can be mind-boggling. EPA's film, "The Gifts," narrated by Lorne Greene, which *TV Guide* called "The Government's Gone With the Wind," is an example of one of the better government-produced films, just as the Paul Newman VISTA film cited earlier.

Another, equally important, side to using audiovisuals in business communication courses is that we are seeing more and more businesses putting their reports on film or tape, from project recaps and discussions to full-scale annual reports. Thus, incorporating films into the curriculum can provide students with a valuable learning situation and help to equip them for real-world business communication techniques. They come to understand the nature of film and its utility in various reporting situations that heretofore could only be addressed by written communications such as the bound report. In this connection, films such as McDonnell-Douglas Corporation's, "Minds over Matter," one of which was awarded Gold Medal honors as the Best Industry Film of the Year, provide the teacher with an excellent tool. The McDonnell-Douglas film, actually a corporate annual report, could provide highly engaging classroom material for study and discussion.

A/V, then, offers the teacher interested in nonverbal means of communicating a wide field for selecting classroom activity material. Films about communication, of course, ought always to be a part of the business communication teacher's lesson planning. An educational film like Iowa State University's "The Expanding World of Communication" supplements and enhances the instructor's own comments about the field of communication. The 28-minute presentation reviews the past history and features scenes and comments on the marvels of more recent technology in business, industry, farming, research, education, and government. The Bell Telephone film, "How to Lose Your Best Customer," offers 30 minutes of well-enacted advice on what to do and what not to do in the workplace.

Their 53-minute "The Alphabet Conspiracy" dramatizes linguistics and even shows slow-motion frames of vocal cords in action as well as the use of the tongue, teeth, and lips in speech. And a wide repertoire of films from Eastman Kodak such as "Images for Imagination" and "Movies Move People" help to show students the value of film as a communication technique.

Let the students learn by the help of appropriate audiovisuals, and both the learning process and the instruction will be more effective and interesting. No instructor would deny the lesson in the old adage of "a picture is worth a thousand words," and indeed in many kinds of business and professional writing and in business writing courses, units on graphics are included. These units stress that the well-executed, carefully-produced graph, drawing, figure, or photograph buttresses or supplements the written text to make the message clearer, more precisely understood, and more thoroughly learned. Motion pictures and videotape presentations do this more and more, for they incorporate the use of graphic arts along with verbal and many other nonverbal ways of communicating to get across their messages.

SUMMARY

When individuals obtain the theory and principles of nonverbal communications, they can then concentrate on the practical use of nonverbals. Media has and will influence the activities of business. The written document will always be important, but with live presentations, teleconferencing, and reports on audiovideo cassettes and film, presenters must be aware of their nonverbal communication. This unit attempts to be a starting point from which the instructor can incorporate nonverbal communication in a basic business communication course.

NOTES

1. Burgoon, Judee K. and Thomas Saine, *The Spoken Dialogue*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.
2. Eakins, Barbara W. and R. Gene Eakins, *Sex Differences in Human Communication*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978.
3. Danziger, Kurt, *Interpersonal Communication*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1976.
4. Burgoon and Saine, *op. cit.*

5. Birdwhistell, Ray, *Introduction to Kinesics*. Louisville, KY: University of Louisville Press, 1952.
6. Mehrabian, Albert, *Public Places and Private Spaces*, New York: Basic Books, 1976.
7. Munter, Mary, "Beyond Words," *Stanford Magazine*, Summer 1982, p. 46.

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- Argyle, Michael. *Bodily Communication*. New York: International Universities Press, 1975.

Sees emotional expressions as deliberately sent social signs. After tracing evolutionary origins of bodily communication, he describes certain signals and how they are sent. Relates nonverbal communication to speech and examines cultural universality.

- Basmajian, Haig A. *The Rhetoric of Nonverbal Communication: Readings*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1971.

Readings from two areas represented: "Nonverbal Communication: Interpersonal and Intercultural," and "Nonverbal Communication: An Agent of Social Change." Note Flora Davis, "How to Read Body Language."

- Baxter, James C., Elaine P. Winters, and Robert E. Hammer. "Gestural Behavior During a Brief Interview as a Function of Cognitive Variables," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 8, 1968, pp. 303-307.

Measures body movements during verbal communication, finding that the more verbally well-differentiated person made the most active, vigorous, and extended movements.

- Beegle, Bernard B. "The Message That Is Sent Without Words," *Supervisory Management*, February, 1971, pp. 12-14.

Urges supervisors to be aware of the nonverbal signals employees send which reveal their attitudes or their morale.

- Davis, Flora. *Inside Intuition*, New York: New American Library, 1973.

Good book for general information on the subject. Includes details on posture, eye movement, smell, touch, and proxemics.

- Davis, Martha. *Understanding Body Movement: An Annotated Bibliography*, New York: Arno Press, 1972.

Excellent for those seeking to research in the field. The book's focus on communication is secondary, but of value. Supplement with Raspberry below.

- Ehat, D. M. and M. Schappner. "What Your Employees' Nonverbal Cues are Telling You," *Administrative Management*, August 1974, pp. 64-66.

Explains various types of nonverbal behavior. In their discussion, the authors stress the value of assessing nonverbal behavior positively rather than negatively.

- Fast, Julius. *Body Language*, New York: M. Evans and Company, 1970.

Written in nontechnical terms, a good book for background. Among the chapters: 1) "The Body in the Message," 3) "How We Handle Space," 4) "When Space is Invaded," 5) "The Masks Men Wear," 8) "Positions, Points, and Postures," and 10) "An Alphabet for Movement."

- Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1966.

Hall details his theory of proxemics introducing the four distances: Intimate, Personal, Social, and Public. Hall's evaluation is cross cultural and includes proxemics and German, English, French, Japanese, and Arabic cultures.

- . *Beyond Words: An Introduction to Nonverbal Communication*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

An introductory work that details all aspects of nonverbal communication from proxemics to kinesics. Useful for its teaching aids.

- Harrison, Albert A., Melanie Hwalek, David F. Raney, and James G. Frits, "Cues to Deception in an Interview Situation," *Social Psychology*, Vol. 41, 1978, pp. 156-161.

From experiments, determined nonverbal cues to deception including hesitancy, and effort of visibility on perception of speaker and duration of response.

Henley, Nancy M. *Body Politics: Power, Sex, and Nonverbal Communication*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Hypothesizes that "body language is not composed only of messages about friendship and sex; it is *body politics* also." The book, written for women who have been oppressed by power because of their sex, devotes chapters to space, time, environment, language, demeanor, touch, kinesics, eye contact, and facial expression.

Huseman, Richard D., James M. Lahiff, and John D. Hatfield. "Nonverbal Communication" in *Interpersonal Communication in Organizations*. Boston: Holbrook Press, 1976.

A basic discussion of nonverbal communication in business. Details ways that environment, and appearance (among others) can convey messages.

Jellison, Jerald M. and William John Ickes. "The Power of the Glance: Desire to See and Be Seen in Cooperative and Competitive Situations," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 10, 1974, pp. 444-450.

Determines that people avoid eye contact with people they compete with. Useful details on conflict management.

Journal of Nonverbal Behavior.

"Publishes original theoretical, empirical, and methodological research in the areas of nonverbal behavior including proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage, facial expression, eye contact, face-to-face interaction, nonverbal emotional expression, and other areas which add significantly to our understanding of nonverbal processes, communication, and behavior."

Knapp, Mark L. *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction*, 2nd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

A textbook which draws from a variety of disciplines including psychology, anthropology, speech communication, and sociology and focuses on the wide range of nonverbal cues. Teacher's manual is available.

Malmberg, Torsten. *Human Territoriality*, The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1980.

"A survey of behavioral territories in man with preliminary analysis and discussion of meaning." Wide-ranging, but valuable for specific details.

McCroskey, James C., Carl E. Larson, and Mark L. Knapp. "Nonverbal Variables," in *An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Good introduction to the subject. Topics covered include environment, territory, appearance, physical behavior, and paralanguage.

McCroskey, Michael B., "The Hidden Messages Managers Send," *Harvard Business Review*, November-December 1979, pp. 135-148.

"Describes three ways managers convey messages about themselves and the ways they see the world . . . metaphors, office settings, and body language and tones that accompany their speech."

Mehrabian, Albert. "Nonverbal Betrayal of Feeling," *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*, Vol. 5, 1971, pp. 64-73.

Reports on experiments that suggest that "negative, affect-indicating nonverbal cues occur more frequently in deceitful than in truthful communication." Suggests types of nonverbal leakage of deception.

Morris, Kenneth T. and Kenneth M. Cinnamon. *A Handbook of Nonverbal Group Exercises*, Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1975.

Offers over 200 exercises with specific goals and purposes. Clear instructions and questions for discussion.

Munter, Mary. "Beyond Words," *Stanford Magazine*, Summer 1982, pp. 46-49.

Concise overview of the research and useful techniques in four areas: the body, the voice, distance, and touching. Illustrated. Available for reproduction as a class handout, free of charge, with permission of the author.

Rasberry, Robert W., "A Collection of Nonverbal Communication Research: An Annotated Bibliography," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Summer 1979, pp. 21-29.

Offers "a basic knowledge about the research that has been conducted" in nonverbal communication. Divided into reference works and works on human nonverbal communication with articles on each area.

Sheridan, John D. "Are You a Victim of Nonverbal Vibes?" *Industry Week*, Vol. 198, July 10, 1978, pp. 36-42.

Stresses need for ability to interpret nonverbal signals which may occur in all aspects of business from a sales presentation to interviews. Offers examples of various types of nonverbal communications.

Weitz, Shirley, Ed. *Nonverbal Communication: Readings with Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

The book features 22 papers in 5 subject areas: facial expressions and visual interaction; para-

language; body movement and gestures; spatial behavior; and multi-channel communication.

Wieman, John N. and Mark L. Knapp. "Turn-taking in Conversation," *The Journal of Communications*, Spring, 1975, pp. 75-92.

Details how people begin and end conversations in a synchronized manner. Details rules for a structure of interactions. Conversationalists (especially interviewers) can consciously apply these rules without disturbing the conversational flow.

Wolfgang, Aaron. *Nonverbal Behavior: Applications and Cultural Implications*, New York: Academic Press, 1979.

A collection of 12 papers on NVC. The book is divided into three parts: Perspectives, Research Applications, and Applications of Nonverbal Behavior in Teaching.

INTERVIEWING

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The interview is the basic method for two people to exchange information. Consequently, a business practitioner must be an effective interviewer to gain and share information and make decisions. The interview is especially important for managers who must exchange information so as to organize, control, and lead the work force.

The interview, however, is a prevalent process outside of business even though many students do not realize it. Whenever people share or obtain information, they are participating in an interview. Once students appreciate the immediate practicality of the process, they are more committed to studying and improving their interview skills. Interview skills are not something that are only used in the employment process; they can be applied by students in many different situations.

The objectives of this unit are to provide an overview of interview principles, to suggest a teaching unit to follow in business communication classes, to describe various classroom activities and exercises that can develop students' interviewing skills, and to supply additional resources for further information on interviewing.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

One of the first principles that must be understood about the interview is that the interviewer and the interviewee will usually have different goals for the interview. Therefore, the participants may consciously or subconsciously hide or distort information. For example, in a performance ap-

praisal, the manager will be interested in discussing both the negative and the positive aspects of the employee's job performance while the employee will want to highlight the positive side and hide or deemphasize any negative points.

Once one understands the obstacle presented by the lack of a common goal, certain measures can be taken to overcome this obstacle. One measure, and probably the most important, is skillful questioning.

Skillful questioning involves much more than just asking appropriate questions. The questioner should be a careful listener, listening as much to what is omitted as to what is said in an answer. The questioner should also observe nonverbal behavior and paralanguage (nonverbal characteristics of the voice). Gaps in the conversation, unnecessarily long and vague answers, hand-nose contact, and a sudden rise in the pitch of the speaker's voice all indicate that deception or evasion may be occurring. The skillful interviewer will notice this, and will develop in-depth questions to counteract the speaker's evasiveness.

A second principle of interviewing is the existence of what S. I. Hayakawa calls the "terminological tangle," in which a discussion is stalemated by conflicted definitions of words and terms.¹ Except for the strictly disciplined languages of the sciences, exact or almost exact agreements about terminology cannot be established. The words most commonly used in interviews mean many things to many people.

How can the misunderstandings caused by the terminological tangle be avoided? The best way is to go into a discussion understanding that there

is no single meaning to most of the words we use. Therefore, these words and terms should either be defined, or, even better, used in such a way, and with enough illustrative examples, that their specific meaning in any interview emerges from their context.

Clearing up the terminological tangle is the responsibility of both the interviewer and the interviewee. A good speaker will define terms and give examples and illustrations, but if this is not done, a good listener will ask questions. These questions, called "questions for clarification," may take the form of "Would you give me an example of that?" But Hayakawa suggests that the most useful question at this stage is "I am going to restate in my own words what I think you mean. Then would you mind telling me if I've understood you correctly?"²

A third principle of interviewing is the presence of bias. Bias is the tendency to see and hear only what one wants to see and hear. The existence of bias in an interview can prevent the optimum exchange of information from taking place. Therefore, it should be avoided as much as possible.

Hayakawa suggests that we follow a basic rule to ensure the maximum flow of information and ideas from one person to another. This rule is that we refrain from agreement or disagreement with a speaker, and refrain from praise or censure of his views, until we are sure of what those views are.³

One way to follow this rule is to use what Irving Lee calls "questions of uniqueness."⁴ These questions are designed to prevent the functional deafness which results when we make generalizations about people. An example of a question of uniqueness during a job interview is, "Exactly what role did you play in this particular project, and how do you think it contributed to the overall success of the project?"

By understanding these principles of interviews, and the obstacles inherent in each principle, we are able to find solutions and become more effective participants of the interview process. The suggested teaching unit which follows is designed to give students practical experience in reaching this goal.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Because of the importance of interviewing, it is important to integrate this topic in the business communication class. This is often done under the guise of the employment process in business communication texts;⁵ but it deserves direct attention

in class rather than as a sub-topic of employment. The interviewee is a primary focus of attention in organizational communication courses and the same should be true for business communication courses.⁶

Of course, a major problem in any class is time. To allow for this problem, a suggested outline is provided with primary and secondary topics. The secondary topics could be presented as time permits.

Topic Outline

I. OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- A. Identify the many uses of the interview
- B. Know when to use the basic strategies such as structured, semi-structured, funnel, inverted-funnel, etc.
- C. List the various nonverbal behavior important in the interview process
- D. Recognize the different types of questions which may be used

II. FUNDAMENTALS OF INTERVIEWING

- A. Establishing objectives
- B. Identifying environment factors
- C. Listing major barriers to the interview
- D. Organizing strategy
 1. Structured, semi-structured, nonstructured
 2. Funnel, inverted funnel
- E. Comparing choices of media—advantages and disadvantages of telephone and face-to-face
- F. Selecting correct techniques
 1. Use of questions
 2. Use of kinetics

III. COMPARISON OF TYPES OF INTERVIEWS BY PURPOSE

- A. Information gathering
- B. Employment
- C. Counseling
- D. Sales
- E. Performance appraisal

IV. COMPARISON OF TYPES BY FORMAT: GROUP VS. INDIVIDUAL

V. THE ROLE OF AN INTERVIEWER VS. INTERVIEWEE

VI. EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activities for Interviews in General

Individual Student Participation for Classroom Presentation

1. After studying different types of interviews, i.e., employment, survey, persuasive, appraisal, information giving and seeking, counseling, exit, sales, et al., identify two you have witnessed or in which you have been personally involved. The first should be an interview you believe was conducted well, the second should be an interview you felt was conducted poorly. Explain the differences between the interviews.

2. Maintain a record of interviews you conduct, are a part of, or witness in a two-week period. Present this information to class for discussion.

3. Identify specific communication factors (i.e., listening kinesics) which are inherent to all types of interviews. Discuss how one may become a more effective interviewer(ee) through improvement in these areas.

4. Identify nonverbal cues which affect the interview process. Conduct or participate in similar types of interviews dressed appropriately and inappropriately. Note any perceivable differences in reaction by other(s) involved.

5. Identify interviews which you will possibly be involved in within the year. Determine specific communication factors which you can improve to be more adequately prepared for these interviews. Design a plan for improvement and record progress during the semester.

6. Tape record an interview in which you participate. After playback, evaluate how the interview could have been improved.

Classroom Participation Activities

1. Have students invite a panel of interviewers to your campus (for classroom or campus program) to discuss the nature and importance of interviewing. Discuss (as a class) areas which the panel should discuss and direct the discussion with these questions.

2. Invite an experienced interviewer to class to discuss effective interviewing techniques. Example of those to invite: journalist, lawyer, personnel manager, medical doctor, television or radio talk show personality, et al.

3. During class discussion develop a list of questions any interviewer may use during interviewing. Identify the types of questions and discuss the

advantages of each type for the interviewing process.

4. Ask students to design cases for various types of interviews. Divide class into triads: an interviewer, an interviewee, and an observer. Have triad role play each case with each member of the triad rotating role played. The observer in each case should record reactions of the interviewer(ee), questions which could have been asked more effectively, questions which should have been asked and were not, questions which should not have been asked, as well as how the interviewer(ee) could improve response to questions. Triad should discuss each case after completion with classroom discussion to follow.

5. Videotape volunteers to role play various interviewing situations. After playback, discuss the interview and improvements that could be made by both the interviewee and interviewer.

6. Invite students in your university drama department to participate in interviewing role playing situation(s). Evaluate the interview(s) following presentation.

Activities for Job Related Interviews

Individual Student Participation for Classroom Presentation

1. Identify specific strengths and weaknesses you possess related to a specific job for which you would like to apply. Explain the best manner of presenting a strength and overcoming a weakness.

2. Develop a list of questions you would like to have answered relating to a career interest area. Select someone in this career and conduct an interview with them, presenting results to the class.

3. Determine questions an interviewer should ask for a job which you would like to apply. Discuss questions and best responses to class.

4. Investigate services provided by your university's placement office and/or state employment agency. Complete necessary forms. Prepare for and complete an interview as an interviewee. Discuss interview with class—including responses which could be improved.

Classroom Participation Activities

1. Identify as a class questions most often asked during a job interview. Have students give correct responses to questions.

2. Identify questions you would want to ask an applicant for a specific job. Discuss legality of questions.

3. Invite a representative from your state employment office. Discuss legality of questions they ask applicants, why they ask certain questions, what they look for in applicants for job placement, etc.

4. Have students collect application forms for jobs in which they are interested. Ask them to complete one of the applications. Divide students in pairs. Each should take turns conducting an interview using the other student's application for prompting questions.

5. Invite a representative from a local union and from management to discuss how employee discipline interviews should be conducted and what action must be taken before an employee can be terminated.

6. Invite an employer and an employee who participates in the Management by Objective program to discuss effective interviewing techniques which should be used in the MBO program. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of the program.

7. Invite an experienced job interviewer to conduct an interview with a student volunteer in front of your class. Discuss questions and responses following the interview.

Specific Structured Exercises

"Interviewing Trios: Interpersonal Problem Diagnosis and Resolution" in *Experiences in Management and Organization Behavior* by Douglas T. Hall, Donald D. Bowen, Roy J. Lewicki, and Francine S. Hall. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1982, pp. 88-94.

"The Interviewee and Dirty Dozen" in *Business and Organizational Communication: An Experimental Skill Building Approach* by Nick Aykodym and Jack L. Simonett. Columbus: Grid Publishers, 1978, p. 85.

"The Ugly Orange Case" in *Experiences in Management and Organizational Behavior* by Douglas T. Hall, Donald D. Bowen, Roy L. Lewicki, and Francine S. Hall. Chicago: St. Clair Press, 1977, pp. 82-85.

"Organizational Decision Making" in *Communication Games* by Karen R. Krupar. New York: Free Press, 1973, pp. 115-119.

"Murder One: Information Sharing" in *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, Volume VI by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones. La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 1977, p. 75.

"Negotiating Differences: Avoiding Polarization" in *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Hu-*

man Relations Training, Volume VI by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones. La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 1977, p. 114.

The interview evaluation sheet which follows can be used in many of these activities to pinpoint some of the important characteristics to look for in the interview.

INTERVIEW EVALUATION SHEET

YOUR NAME _____

INTERVIEW GROUP _____

Please fill out one form for each interview group.

1. Which of the following describes the role of the interviewer?

- ☐ Tell and sell.
- ☐ Listen and agree.
- ☐ Listen, no input.
- ☐ Mutual input (balanced).

2. Which of the following describes the role of the interviewee?

- ☐ Tell and sell.
- ☐ Listen and agree.
- ☐ Listen, no input.
- ☐ Mutual input (balanced).

3. How well did the interviewee maintain eye contact with the interviewer?

- ☐ Good eye contact.
- ☐ Wandered.
- ☐ Darted.
- ☐ Stared.

4. How well did the interviewee listen to the interviewer?

- ☐ Very well.
- ☐ Well.
- ☐ Poorly.
- ☐ Very poorly.

5. Which of the following describes the appearance of the interviewee?

- ☐ Strong, positive appearance.
- ☐ Less, positive appearance.
- ☐ Neutral appearance.
- ☐ Negative appearance.

6. The interview atmosphere was:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Unpleasant | Pleasant |
| Rushed | Relaxed |
| Confusing | Clear |
| Hostile | Friendly |
| Structured | Unstructured |
| Blunt | Tactful |
| Suspicious | Trustful |
| Nervous | Composed |
| Uncooperative | Cooperative |
| Quiet | Enthusiastic |

7. List any other comments about the interview.

SUMMARY

The interview is one of the best opportunities to exchange information, ideas, and opinions. Successful interviewing techniques can benefit everyone. But to be an effective interviewer, one must be aware of the obstacles inherent in the interview process, and the ways to overcome these obstacles. This unit is designed to enable instructors to teach their students good interviewing techniques and skills.

NOTES

1. S. I. Hayakawa, *The Use and Misuse of Language*, New York: Fawcett World Library, 1962, p. 70.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
5. Dorrell, Jean and Betty Johnson, "A Comparative Analysis of Topics Covered in Twenty College-level Communication Textbooks," *The ABCA Bulletin*, September 1982, p. 15.
6. Rogers, Donald P., "The Content of Organizational Communication Texts," *The Journal of Business Communication*, Vol. 16, Fall 1978, p. 61.
7. Hennington, Jo Ann, "Role Playing: An Excellent Option for Teaching Job Interviewing Techniques," in *The Teaching of Business Communication*, edited by George H. Douglas. A publication of the American Business Communication Association, 1978, p. 144.

SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Austin, David L. "Transactional Interviewing," *Personnel Journal*, June 1974.

This article discusses special skills required for both an interviewer and interviewee. The interview is analyzed from a planning orientation. Five general steps taken by every competent interviewer are presented.

Cogger, John W. "Are You a Skilled Interviewer?" *Personnel Journal*, November 1982.

Seven guidelines for conducting an effective employment interview are discussed. The guidelines are: be prepared, building rapport, comfort is the key, plans and procedures, what should I

ask, communication techniques, a learning experience.

Einhorn, Lois J., Patricia Hayes Bradley, and John E. Baird, Jr., *Effective Employment Interviewing*, Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1982.

This short book covers the entire employment process from the perspective of the interviewee. It is directed toward the recent college graduate who has limited experience. This text could be used as a supplemental book in a college course or may be considered for use with an employment workshop. It is extremely readable but few references are provided.

Fear, Richard A. *The Evaluation Interview*, 2nd ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973. 320 pages.

The title of the book implies that it is limited to performance evaluation interviews; however, it discusses all aspects of the interviewing process. Eight specific techniques are presented plus an extensive discussion of questioning techniques.

Kohn, Mervin, "What Off-Campus Interviewers Look for in Young Job Seekers," *Advanced Management Journal*, Winter 1975.

Professional interviews from 35 firms were surveyed to determine the factors that influence personnel people to make a job offer. The major finding discussed is that an interviewer makes up his mind about a candidate during the first 10 to 15 minutes of an interview; no matter how long the interview session lasts, the interviewer is unlikely to change his opinion.

Moffatt, Thomas L. *Selection Interviewing for Managers*, New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

Although the title of this book indicates the focus as being the selection interview, a comprehensive discussion of the entire interview process is included. Nonverbal communication, listening, and preparation is extensively reviewed. An entire chapter of the text is dedicated to the Cone System of Interviewing.

Rogers, Carl and Richard E. Farson, "Active Listening," Chicago: University of Chicago Industrial Relations Center.

This classic article is found in numerous books and manuals and is frequently referenced. Because listening is so important in the interview process this article may be a valuable supplement for workshops and classes.

Smeltzer, Larry R. and John L. Waltman, *Managerial Communication: A Strategic Approach*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1984.

Chapter nine of this text discusses the interview process from the perspective of both the interviewer and interviewee. Eight typical questions which are often asked about the interview process are addressed. Special emphasis is placed on question types. Chapter ten discusses the employment interview, performance review interviews, and the counseling interview.

Squires, Gregory D. *Affirmative Action: A Guide for the Perplexed*, East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 1977.

This is a handy reference for getting through the legal maze of employment interviewing. EEO and Affirmative Action is explained and three equal opportunity cases provided. A directory of Civil Rights Agencies is also provided. Several emerging controversies are also discussed.

Stano, Michael E. and N. L. Reinsch, Jr. *Communication in Interviews*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982, 233 pages.

This text provides one of the most comprehensive sources available on interview research. Each of the 11 chapters has over 30 citations and several chapters have as many as 70 or 80 citations. Consequently, it is a valuable source for those who want to do further research on the interview process. The book is also unique in that it has separate chapters on medical, legal, and sales interviews.

Stewart, Charles J. and William B. Cash, Jr. *Interviewing: Principles and Practices*, 2nd ed., Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown, 1978, 286 pages.

This book is both general and specialized. The first four chapters treat principles applicable to all interview settings. The last six chapters deal with specialized types of interviews—survey and journalistic interviews, employment selection interviews, appraisal and disciplinary interviews, counseling interviews, and persuasive interviews. The book is designed for college students with little or no previous exposure to the interview process; however, it is a valuable reference book for any professional regardless of experience.

CONFERENCING

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In the average company, time spent in conferences and meetings costs many thousands of dollars each year. Experts estimate that many managers spend as much as 40 percent of their working day in conferences and meetings and that approximately one-third of this time is wasted.

In the past, only supervisors and managers participated in conferences to discuss company problems and reach organizational decisions. Today, more and more companies are realizing that involved, loyal employees are vital to efficient operations and high productivity. They have learned that employees who have opportunities to discuss their problems are less likely to be frustrated and more likely to be loyal and productive workers. They know that the success of any organization depends on the participation, cooperation, and teamwork of all its members. Therefore, many of these companies have organized programs to encourage employees to participate in problem analysis and decision making through conferencing.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

The terms *conference* and *meeting* are often used interchangeably. In business, however, the term *conference* generally implies a session in which participants act as a team thinking together to solve a problem, while the term *meeting* implies a brief session during which factual information is communicated to participants. Ideally, all group members participate actively in a business conference.

Business conferences have many advantages:

1. They stimulate creative thinking, thereby enabling organizations to profit from obtaining valuable ideas from their members.
2. They satisfy the basic human drive to have one's ideas recognized, thereby strengthening employee self-esteem, morale, and loyalty.
3. They enable employees to discuss problems affecting them and their work, thereby decreasing employee frustration and increasing productivity.
4. They allow employees to participate in making decisions which directly affect them, thereby strengthening positive relations among employees and between employees and management.

The major disadvantage of conferences is that they are time-consuming and expensive. However, knowledge of proper conferencing techniques can maximize the benefits of group interaction and simultaneously minimize time and money spent on such meetings. Conference participants can increase their contributions by following these rules:

1. *Prepare thoroughly.* Participants should learn as much as possible about the topics to be discussed. They should gather information by reading reports, articles, or books or by talking with others knowledgeable about these topics. They should collect helpful materials to bring to the conference. These materials should be organized so they can be shared conveniently during the conference. In preparing for a conference, participants should remember the seven P's of planning—Proper Prior Planning Prevents Pathetically Poor Performance.

2. *Be willing to share ideas.* A successful conference requires a topic about which participants

are informed and to which they are willing to contribute through creative thinking. Participants must be willing to share information because only rarely does any one person possess all the information necessary to solve a problem. The goals of each participant should be to share their own ideas and to encourage others possessing relevant information to reveal their knowledge in order to shed light on the problem at hand.

Neither persons who know more than they tell nor those who attempt to tell more than they know make effective conference participants. Successful conferences are based on the assumption that participants will speak openly and honestly with good will for purposes of sharing ideas, increasing understanding, and reaching intelligent decisions.

3. *Keep remarks brief and relevant.* Conferences become boring and unproductive mainly because some individuals insist on relating personal opinions, preferences, and experiences which have little or no bearing on the topic under discussion. Effective participants stick to the subject and help focus the ideas of others on the topic under consideration. They make their points clearly and concisely. In this way, all participants contribute to the discussion. No one dominates the conference, and no one is denied opportunity to speak.

4. *Keep an open mind.* Participants should definitely think about the problems to be discussed before arriving at a conference; but they should not decide firmly on solutions until they have heard evidence from all participants. Conferences are based on the assumption that no one possesses the whole truth and that each participant has worthwhile knowledge and experience to contribute. Participants should expect to arrive at decisions by freely and thoroughly examining facts and ideas from several perspectives. To achieve a true exchange of ideas, each participant must encourage others to express their viewpoints by demonstrating respect for them and their opinions.

5. *Be prepared to give and receive constructive criticism.* Because conferences frequently involve searches for solutions to perplexing problems, participants must be willing to venture into areas that are not yet fully understood. If a conference is to provide thorough investigation of all possible alternatives, an atmosphere must be established in which participants feel free to offer all sorts of ideas—complete and incomplete, tested and untested—for group criticism. It is only through critical examination of all conceivable alternatives that a productive group decision can be forged. Demo-

cratic business institutions cannot survive without the sharing and testing of ideas and information through frank discussion and constructive criticism.

6. *Help reconcile differences of opinion.* Conferences are frequently held to discuss difficult, sensitive problems. Therefore, opposing view can often cause strong disagreement. Ability to reconcile differences of opinion is vital because problems cannot be solved effectively in a hostile atmosphere. Effective conference participants point out values in opposing viewpoints. They encourage group members to seek compromises. They realize that successful conferences require participants who are able to disagree without being disagreeable.

7. *Help reach intelligent decisions.* If productive action is to be taken after thoroughly considering all viewpoints, a decision must be reached about the alternative to pursue. The secret to intelligent decision making lies in striking a balance between jumping to premature conclusions and procrastinating until productive action is no longer feasible. If conference participants prepare thoroughly, share their ideas frankly, make their remarks brief and relevant, keep open minds, subject their ideas to constructive criticism, and try to reconcile differences of opinion, they greatly increase chances of reaching intelligent decisions.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

By increasing student knowledge of group dynamics, teachers can help students function more effectively in conference settings. This unit on conferencing techniques should enable students to understand group communications, contribute to groups in which they participate, and yet maintain their independence.

While the suggested time for this unit is two to three weeks, many of the activities may be integrated throughout the communication course as a part of any group-centered activity.

Topic Outline

I. OBJECTIVES OF UNIT

After studying conferencing techniques, students will be able to:

- A. Define conferencing.
- B. Explain the importance of business conferences.
- C. List and describe the advantages and disadvantages of conferences.
- D. Explain the rules for effective conference participation.

- E. Identify areas in which they need help in working in groups.
- F. Use one or more self-evaluation techniques to determine their effectiveness as conference participants.
- G. Use a group climate self-assessment scale to determine how their behavior affects group climate.
- H. Describe the components of group process and the relationship and importance of these components to small group communication.
- I. Use effective interpersonal skills in participating in conferences.

II. FUNDAMENTALS OF CONFERENCING

- A. Definition of Conferencing
- B. Advantages and Disadvantages of Conferencing
- C. Rules for Effective Conference Participation
 - 1. Prepare thoroughly: Seven P's of Planning
 - 2. Share ideas willingly
 - 3. Keep remarks brief and relevant
 - 4. Keep an open mind
 - 5. Give and receive constructive criticism
 - 6. Assist in reconciling differences of opinion
 - 7. Help reach intelligent decisions

III. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

IV. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Getting Acquainted

The teacher's role and classroom climate are crucial to effective instruction in conferencing techniques. To develop greater understanding and trust among class members, time should be devoted to sharing information such as backgrounds, interests, and feelings about group members—including the teacher.¹ Through this informal information exchange, an interpersonal climate conducive to sharing, risk-taking, and mutual support is established. Such a climate is vital to effective conferencing communication. During the first class meeting, get-acquainted exercises and brief self-introduction can help reduce tension.² Divide students into small groups, and have each group spend two or three

minutes defining a group. Each group's definition can serve as a basis for class discussion. The instructor should also provide several definitions to compare with student definitions. A variation of this exercise is to have the class identify and analyze the groups within the class.

Assessing Student Needs

To help students identify their weaknesses in participating in conferences, assign the class a problem to be solved. Write the problem on the chalkboard or duplicate and distribute a copy to each student. Without designating a leader, disassociate yourself from the class discussion. After twenty or thirty minutes, ask the class for its solution or a report of the class's discussion to that point by asking questions such as: What happened in the group discussion? Who facilitated the discussion? Who was instrumental in keeping the discussion moving? What problems were encountered? What procedures or guidelines were established? What factors helped or hindered the group's progress?³

To help students determine how their behavior influences the conference climate (cohesiveness), Beebe and Masterson⁴ suggest using a group climate assessment scale. Students rate themselves on a scale of one to seven on characteristics indicative of defensive and supportive behavior. Defensive behaviors include responses which tend to evaluate, control, manipulate, indicate a lack of concern, and elevate one's status. Supportive behaviors include responses which tend to be descriptive, problem-oriented, spontaneous, and empathetic. This assessment scale may be used with any class activity or discussion.

When students use confirming rather than disconfirming responses with other conferees, they create a supportive, trustful climate and promote conference effectiveness and individual satisfaction. Therefore, students should understand the differences between confirming and disconfirming responses.

Confirming response help people value themselves more, while disconfirming responses cause people to value themselves less. Disconfirming responses ignore, interrupt, fail to acknowledge the speaker, change the direction of discussion, deviate from the subject, ramble, overuse euphemisms and cliches, and convey verbal messages inconsistent with body language. On the other hand, confirming responses include direct acknowledgment of the speaker, agreement on content of the discussion,

clarification of ideas, and expression of positive feelings.⁵

The teacher can develop a rating scale based on the characteristics of confirming and disconfirming responses. Then, students can be asked to use this rating scale to evaluate their behavior as confirming or disconfirming as they participate in class discussions or extracurricular activities.

Conferencing can pressure participants to conform to the group's decision. To help students recognize the extent to which they are willing to "go along," the instructor can use an exercise based on the Asch Perception Study.⁶ Have several student volunteers close their eyes while the rest of the class observes. Ask the volunteers to examine an object (box, ball, string, etc.) by touch and remember its characteristics, such as its shape, size, length, and diameter. After all volunteers have examined the object, ask each volunteer to describe the object's characteristics. Discuss the extent to which the last volunteer "goes along" with the group's estimate rather than adhering to his or her convictions.

Understanding the Conferencing Process

Effective conference participation requires knowledge of the principles of small group communication. Therefore, the teacher should explain the essential components of group process—group development, norms, goals, leadership, cohesiveness, networks, roles, conflict resolution, and outcomes. Then, the teacher should provide opportunities for students to role play, observe, and analyze these group process components. In these exercises, some students should be assigned to observe and analyze the group interaction and to discuss what they saw. Student observers should complete a simple observation form similar to the one outlined in J. W. Pfeiffer's and J. Jones' *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*⁷ to identify factors such as who talks to whom (networks), whose ideas are most influential, who drops out, how participants respond, and what group behavior norms develop. In addition, student observers should note the extent to which group members exhibit rules of effective conference participation outlined in the introduction.

To help students understand how groups develop, instruct them to maintain a journal describing the behavior of all groups in which they participate. Students should identify the various stages of group development—orientation or goal setting, conflict, leadership emergence, and reinforcement.

These journals can be used as a basis for class discussion.⁸

To help students understand how group behavior patterns (norms) emerge during conferences, instruct selected students to vie for group leadership, violate spatial arrangements, to discuss unacceptable topics, or to act out someone else's role. Have students discuss how these behaviors affect group function and effectiveness.

To help students understand group process, use the Fishbowl Discussion Technique. Divide students into two groups of five to seven participants, and direct them to sit in concentric circles facing inwards. Students in the inner circle decide on a topic and engage in a discussion while students in the outer circle observe. Outer circle participants look for group development (goal setting); interpersonal communication skills (expressing, listening, responding); leadership (coordinator, follower, blocker); climate (cohesiveness); methods of conflict resolution; and decision-making. After about ten minutes, stop the discussion to permit the observers to give feedback about the group process. In this exercise, pairs or partners may be used with one of the pair in the inner circle deciding on the topic and engaging in the discussion while the partner in the outer circle observes. The observer then gives feedback to his or her partner about how the partner contributed to or detracted from the discussion.⁹

Understanding the Interpersonal Aspects of Conferencing

To give students experience with the interpersonal aspects of conferencing, have them participate in a group art project. Divide the class into groups of about five students, and give each group a blank paste board and two crayons. Tell the group they are to draw a team picture incorporating individual and group ideas. Instruct them to assign a team name to the picture. Without providing any additional guidelines, tell them they have twenty minutes to complete the project. The teacher should either leave the room or unobtrusively observe the group interaction. They'll be discovered if they're the only students not participating. After twenty minutes, ask each group to discuss the following questions:

1. Did the group reach a consensus about what to do?
2. Did each member contribute ideas?
3. Did anyone isolate himself or herself from the group?

4. Was there an effort to solicit his or her ideas or was the silence taken as approval of the ideas expressed?

5. Was there a leader?

6. Was he or she self-appointed or chosen by the group?

7. Did the leader emerge because he or she was most vocal?

8. By what methods did the leader gain that role?

9. Did group members vie for leadership?

10. Was the drawing decided on beforehand, or was it spontaneous?

11. Was equal opportunity provided for everyone to participate in the drawing?

12. Was the main concern of the group "getting the job done"?

13. How was this concern expressed? If this was not the main concern, what was?

14. Did the group engage in any conscious, critical examination of its interpersonal relations and patterns by asking questions such as "How are we doing?"

15. Did anyone draw over another person's work?

16. If yes, what was the reaction?

17. Was there resentment or revenge?

18. Was any frustration shown? If so, how was it displayed?

19. How did the artistic (or nonartistic) abilities of the group members affect the drawing? Did anyone feel inadequate? Did an artistic person draw the whole picture?

20. Did the picture illustrate the integration of individual ideas as well as group ideas? What does the picture say about the group's interaction pattern and cohesiveness?¹⁰

Factors such as perceptions, expectations, and previous group experience influence the roles people assume in groups. Providing students with a comprehensive checklist of group roles can help them understand the roles they assume during conferences. Benne and Sheats¹¹ have devised such a checklist. Students can use this list to assess whether they assume task, maintenance, or individual roles. A description of the behavior associated with each role is provided. For example, task roles are useful when group members desire to help achieve the task the group is trying to accomplish. Persons playing these roles may function as initiator-contributor, information seeker or giver, opinion seeker or giver, elaborator, coordinator, evaluator-critic, energizer, procedural technician, or recorder. Maintenance roles foster group building. Persons playing these roles are encouragers, harmonizers, compromisers, gate-keepers, expeditors, standard setters, group observers, or followers. Individual

roles are classified as aggressor, blocker, recognition seeker, self-confessor, playboy, dominator, help-seeker, and special-interest pleader.

Research shows that group participants tend to categorize group members according to these roles.¹² However, caution students against being too rigid in their role classifications. Emphasize the fact that group members frequently change roles during the course of a conference. "A role is a dynamic concept; it changes as perceptions, experiences, and expectations change."¹³

SUMMARY

Conferences that are well planned, effectively run, and democratically participated in are effective communication vehicles. They allow employees to be heard and recognized, to share their ideas, to seek solutions to mutual problems, to participate in decision making, and to share in formulating company policies.

Businesses are increasingly using employee conferences to solve work-related problems in an effort to improve morale and increase productivity. As students enter the labor force, they are likely to be involved in such conferences. To participate effectively in business conferences, students should understand (1) the purposes, advantages, and disadvantages of conferences; (2) the rules for effective conferencing; and (3) the principles and dynamics of small group communication. To help students develop these understandings, they should be given opportunities to participate in small-group experiences that add a dimension of realism to classroom instruction and facilitate mastery of conferencing principles and techniques.

NOTES

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2. Beebe, Steven A. and John T. Masterson, *Communication in Small Groups: Principles and Practices*, Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1982, p. 76.

3. Book and Galvin, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

4. Beebe and Masterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-88.

6. Marino, C. J. and C. J. Parker, "A Modification of the Asch Experiment," *Journal of Social Psychology*, February 1969, pp. 91-95.

7. Pfeiffer, J. William and John E. Jones, *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, San Diego: University Associates, 1974, pp. 47-48.

8. Fisher, B. A., "Decision Emergence: Phases in Group Decision Making," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 37, 1970, pp. 53-66.

9. Pfeiffer and Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-27.

10. Book and Galvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

11. Benne, Kenneth D. and Paul Sheats, "Functional Roles of Group Members," *Journal of Social Issues*, Spring 1948, pp. 41-49.

12. Bormann, Ernest G., *Discussion and Group Methods: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed., New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1975, p. 209.

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Benne, Kenneth and Paul Sheats. "Functional Roles of Group Members," *Journal of Social Issues*, Spring 1948, pp. 41-49.

Describes a classification system based on group task roles, group building and maintenance roles, and individual roles for observing group interaction. Gives description of each role.

Book, Cassandra and Kathleen Galvin. *Instruction in and About Small Group Discussions*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, November 1975.

Presents theory of small group discussion and gives practical experiences.

Bormann, Ernest G., *Discussion and Group Methods: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed., New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1975.

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effects of status on group participants; discusses networks in group communication.

Brilhart, John K. *Effective Group Discussion*. 3rd ed. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company, Publishers, 1978.

Defines small-group communication; discusses reflective thinking as a problem-solving alternative.

Burgoon, Michael, Judee K. Heston, and James McCroskey, *Small Group Communication: A Functional Approach*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.

Discusses conflict resolution and effective participation in small group communication; contains an extensive bibliography.

Fisher, B. Audrey, *Small Group Decision Making: Communication and the Group Process*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980.

Presents a section on the descriptive and prescriptive approaches to problem solving; provides some of the most recent research on developmental phases of groups.

Goldberg, Alvin A. and Carl E. Lanson, *Group Communication: Discussion Process and Applications*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

Provides a guide for developing a form for observing group interaction for simple class-related activities; also gives details regarding disconfirming and confirming responses.

Hara, Paul A. *Handbook of Small Group Research*, New York: Free Press, 1976.

Summarizes significant research related to small group communication.

Jones, John and J. Pfeiffer, *The 1981 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*, Tenth Annual. San Diego: University Associates, Inc., 1981.

Contains materials for lecturettes related to various phases of human relations training. Can be used for background information pertaining to effective conference or group participation.

Leathers, Dale, "The Feedback Rating Instrument: A New Means of Evaluating Discussion," *Central States Speech Journal*, Spring 1971, pp. 32-40.

Gives nine dimensions for feedback responses; provides a rating scale to evaluate group member responses.

Maier, Norman R. F., *Problem Solving and Discussions and Conferences*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963.

Presents the importance of researching the problem before offering solution; emphasizes importance of prior preparation in effective conference or group participation.

Pfeiffer, J. W., and J. Jones, eds. *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training*, 6 vols. San Diego: University Associates, Inc., 1973-77.

Contains a series of structured experiences divided into three categories: unadapted experiences,

highly adapted experiences, and innovated experiences. Activities are especially adaptable to small group discussion.

Sieberg, Evelyn and Carl Lanson, "Dimensions of Interpersonal Response," (paper delivered at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Phoenix, April 1971): Quoted in Steven A. Beebe's and John T. Masterson's *Communicating in Small Groups: Theory and Practices*. Dallas: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1982.

Examines ways in which group participants respond to communicative acts of others; provides description of disconfirming and confirming responses.

Stenzor, B. "The Spatial Factor in Face to Face Discussion Groups," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 45, 1950, pp. 552-555.

Discusses the effect of seating arrangements on group communication.

ORAL AND CAREER ITEMS

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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Business practitioners appreciate the need for effective oral communication skills. In their careers they are called upon to make presentations to their fellow employees as well as other professionals at service meetings. While students usually get some training in speech communication courses, the added experience in their business communication course helps reinforce what has been learned earlier.

Typically, this later, narrower training must be carefully coordinated with other assignments in the course. However, these other assignments keep the subject matter businesslike. And, because the students know the content of their presentations so well, they feel more confident about them than if they had put in only a perfunctory effort at research.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

Oral communication may be both informal—consisting primarily of the person-to-person communication process, or formal—consisting of such forms as speeches, conferences, and interviews. However, the focus here is on principles and theory of the formal oral communication process.

The principles of effective written communication apply equally well to oral communication. The elements of language precision, clarity, viewpoint, sincerity, and organization are all vital to the successful transmission of both types of messages.

Also, the same communication theory in most instances can be applied to both oral and written

communication processes. However, some major differences between oral and written reporting exist. Most authorities agree that the two major differences are in the area of time and feedback.

Time Factor

Oral presentations are restricted by the time factor from both the speaker's and the audience's viewpoint. The speaker is usually limited to a set time for the presentation; therefore, concepts must be presented clearly, concisely, and exactly. There is little time for repetition on the part of the speaker and no opportunity for relistening. Also, because the audience cannot easily absorb detailed analyses of research findings, the speaker often must spend more time on conclusions and recommendations in oral reporting than in written reporting.

Feedback

Even though the time factor may be a hindrance to effective oral communication, oral presentations allow for the relay of instant feedback. Audience feedback allows the speaker to learn whether a message got through to the receiver as intended. Feedback may come through the audience's non-verbal language. In oral presentations to small groups, for example, a questioning look or a defiant stare afford the speaker an opportunity to rephrase a position—ideally in more understandable or more convincing language.

Environment and Perception

Because of these two major differences between oral and written reporting, one should probably emphasize communication theory relative to environment and to perception. The communication environment includes not only the physical setting, but also the audience and the speaker. In oral communication the speaker must analyze the audience and seek the audience's participation. Audience analysis will involve searching for characteristics of the group that could have an effect on the speaker's presentation: for example, age, education, experience, and knowledge of the subject. A speaker will also continue to analyze the audience during the presentation through feedback from listeners. If a speaker forms a correct image of the audience, the presentation will have purpose for the hearers.

Ethos

While it is important that the speaker form the right perception of the audience, it is equally important that the audience have a good image of the speaker. A speaker's personal appearance, posture, facial expressions, and voice inflection affect the audience's image of his or her presentation. However, the audience is most interested in the ethos or believability factor of the presentation. Thorough preparation and sincere persuasive techniques will strengthen the speaker's credibility. Micheli, Cespedes, Byker, and Raymond (1984)¹ suggest that one persuasive technique is for the speaker to talk with one person at a time. They suggest that the speaker focus intently on one person and talk to that person for five to ten seconds, then move to a second person, a third, etc. Another persuasive strategy suggested by Pearce, Figgins, and Golen (1984)² is to seek a "yes-response" attitude from the audience. They suggest that the speaker attempt to lead the audience through a list of situations to which the hearers answer "yes," then expect the audience to say "yes" to the speaker's proposal.

Summary

Basically, communication theory and communication principles apply equally well to written or oral messages. However, specific differences in the communication environment and in the perception of those within the environment need to be emphasized in a study of oral communication.

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

Timing of Course in Students' Curriculum

The unit on oral reporting suggested here assumes that students have already completed a course in speech communication. It thus builds on the skills developed there focusing on the business applications. Without a previous course in spoken communication, it might be impossible to give meaningful training in just a single unit of a business communication course.

Timing of the Unit Within the Course

The unit should be introduced no later than the third week before the close of the course. By that time students have completed their formal reports and have a good basis upon which to build their formal reports. The last two weeks of the course can then be devoted to in-class presentations. If too many are crowded into too little time, the speakers become rushed and the audience may tire. Instructors wishing to grade carefully and objectively are wise to schedule no more than five or six speakers in a one-hour class period.

The Unit's Objectives

During the development of the unit, students should achieve the following basic objectives:

1. Knowledge of the different oral reporting techniques required in the typical business career;
2. Awareness of the communication advantages and disadvantages offered by both oral and written communications;
3. Competence in the use of visual aids in oral presentations;
4. Awareness of the importance of ethos and ways in which it can be built.

Components of the Unit

Following is a chronological list of suggested topics to be covered by the instructor. Two, one-hour class periods should suffice.

- I. INTRODUCTION: ORAL REPORTING IN BUSINESS
- II. ORAL VS. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
 - A. Preparation effort
 - B. Audience's attention span
 - C. Use of visuals
 - D. Topic coverage

III. ORAL REPORTING OPTIONS

- A. Impromptu
- B. Read
- C. Memorized
- D. Extemporaneous

VI. ETHOS AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

- A. Definition
- B. Elements of Ethos
 - 1. Appearance
 - 2. Competence
 - 3. Credibility

V. VISUAL AIDS

- A. Content
- B. Suggestions for preparation
- C. Options

VI. PREPARING TO SPEAK

- A. Review of outlining
- B. Preparing effective openings and closings
- C. Handling stage fright

VII. DELIVERY

- A. Getting and maintaining interest
- B. Feedback: sources and adaptations
- C. Effective use of notes
- D. Effective use of visual aids
- E. Handling questions

Comments

The areas suggested for inclusion might be covered in two, one-hour lectures. The first could include Parts I-IV, the second V-VII. The discussion of visual aids should be reinforced with actual visuals (both good and bad). Students should be encouraged to prepare visuals on poster boards rather than the chalkboard.

Feedback from the instructor should parallel the points covered during the instruction. It should also be detailed with comments made during the presentation. Unlike a written report which can be reviewed several times, the oral report (unless recorded) no longer exists once it is delivered. If copious comments are not made on a grade sheet, the basis for the grade is lost.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Combine Oral Presentation Assignment with Another Assignment

Frequently a business communication class is

already overcrowded with assignments. Thus one might combine the oral presentation assignment with another assignment. Students thus know well the material they are to present and lose some of the fear that they feel about the presentation. It also helps save classroom time. Two popular assignments can be easily combined with the oral presentation: the analytical report (short or long), and a career research project.

The Analytical Report

One can use any aspect of the report and have the student give a short three-to-five or even a ten-minute speech on it. This can be done for short or long reports. Flatley and Vik³ offer the following comprehensive list of topics on which students can give a two-to-ten minute speech from the report:

1. Summarize the research design for your long report
2. Describe your progress on your report
3. Summarize an article read for your report
4. Evaluate one or several library sources on your report topic
5. Discuss a graphic aid you have prepared for your report
6. Describe the findings in your report to the class.
7. Defend the conclusions of your report assuming your audience is the board of directors for the business involved.

The Career Research Project

A career research project can also be used for oral report topics. A student can research his or her prospective career through personal interviews with actual practitioners and use secondary research as well. The student can then give a two-to-ten minute talk on the job, i.e., identifying the job, describing duties, training needed, salary, and promotion possibilities. The student's primary interest in the topic should enable him or her to relax while making the presentation.

Various Topics

Several other topics of varied length and other less-structured presentations can be used. One can have students give a one-, two-, or three-minute talk on a topic of their choosing or on an assigned topic. These topics could include:

1. Talking about oneself—an autobiography
2. A current issue
3. A campus problem

4. Evaluation of a meeting or a speaker
5. Summarizing an article.

Panel or Symposium

Panels and symposia are discussion procedures which may be used in either large or small groups to teach oral presentations effectively. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for a few well-prepared students to discuss a topic of general concern in front of the class. Four to five is the ideal number of participants, plus a moderator. Both procedures are followed by questions or discussion from the floor.

Panel-participants engage in an informal free exchange of ideas among themselves concerning the topic. The presentations are considered impromptu, but the participants should be well informed. This allows the students to gather information, familiarize themselves with it, and then present it in front of a group of people—the class.

Symposium-participants (usually with divergent viewpoints) prepare and formally present a set speech (statement), or facts, or opinions regarding various facets of the topic. They may engage in an informal discussion among themselves.

Procedures: Select a pertinent problem cooperatively with the group. Choose panel or symposium participants and the moderator. All class members may be assigned to prepare for a panel, and then the panelists can be selected extemporaneously. Assist the participants in obtaining the information needed for worthwhile discussion. Have a practice session, if possible.

Since much of the success of the presentation depends on the moderator, the moderator's responsibility should be spelled out carefully and clearly so that any member of the class can be given the responsibility. The following ideas should be taught for the moderator's role:

1. Become well versed on the topic.
2. Inform the audience of the topic to be discussed, giving enough background information so that their interest and attention may be aroused and secured.
3. Introduce the members of the panel or symposium.
4. Get the discussion under way, usually by stating a provocative question and then calling upon one of the participants.
5. Guide the discussion—keep remarks focused on the problem; energize a lagging discussion, bring each participant into the discussion; see that no one monopolizes, make both periodic and final summaries.

6. Stimulate questions and discussion from the audience.

Evaluation as a Teaching Tool in Oral Presentation

Evaluation is the key to the effective teaching of oral presentation. One useful method employs the videotape machine for feedback and for evaluative purposes.

One can have students videotaped while speaking. When the speaker or speakers finish, one can play the presentation back immediately, or it can be played in private with the instructor for evaluation and feedback. Having the class view the playback and evaluate is advantageous since it can help prepare them for their own presentations.

Speakers should evaluate themselves first. The class should be instructed to give one positive and or one negative evaluation, but not to overwhelm the speaker with too many negative evaluations. Students may be instructed to write their suggestions to give to the speaker at the end of class. Each student should have an evaluation form with specific points on which to comment.

Evaluation without the benefits of a videotape machine can be done effectively. The class can use evaluation sheets and should write the evaluation on it as the speaker is speaking.

SUMMARY

There is no limit to the topics one can choose in making an assignment for oral presentations. Great care should be taken not to consume too much time for this assignment because of the many other assignments often included in a basic business communication class.

Using a videotape machine enhances the evaluation of oral presentations, but if one is not available, one should give immediate oral and written feedback.

NOTES

1. Micheli, Cespedes, Byker, and Raymond. *Managerial Communication*, Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1984, pp. 126-129.
2. Pearce, C. Glenn, Ross Figgins, and Steven P. Golen. *Principles of Business Communication: Theory, Application, and Technology*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984, pp. 14-17, 420-423.
3. Flatley, Marie and Gretchen Vik. "Incorporat-

ing Oral Communication and Dictation Skills in Business Writing Classes," *Teaching Business Writing, Approaches, Plans, Pedagogy, Research*. Jeanne W. Halpern, Editor, ABCA, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1983, pp. 129-145.

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Chapter 17, "Oral Reports and Presentations," gives numbered guidelines to analyze the purpose of the oral report and to improve its delivery. Includes discussion of videotaped presentations.

Brown, Leland, *Effective Business Report Writing*, 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985, pp. 313-327.

Chapter 10, "Oral Reports and Conferences," details presentation of the oral report and visual aids as well as delivery. Gives lists and questions to assist students in preparing oral reports.

Cohen, Marlene C., "A Overcoming Speech Anxiety Course for the Community College," paper presented at 1983 meeting of the Eastern Speech Communication Assoc. Available from EDRS.

Suggests that speech anxiety arises from fear of certain audiences and fear of speaking on certain topics. Uses four types of approaches: 1) creating a support group atmosphere; 2) employing relaxation exercises and desensitization techniques; 3) improving confidence through cognitive restructuring; 4) completing an abbreviated public-speaking assignment.

Cornwell, Robert C. and Darwin W. Manship, *Applied Business Communication*, Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1978, pp. 293-298.

Chapter 12, "Oral Communication of Business Messages" is a general summary of oral presentation techniques. Details audience analysis.

Dubner, Frances S. and Frederick Mills, "TRIPLE-SPEAK: A Teaching Technique to Multiply Suc-

cessful Speech Performance," *Communication Education*, April 1984, pp. 168-172.

With recommended technique, students deliver speeches three times, each time to a different third of the class. Helps beginning students develop self-confidence and communication effectiveness more rapidly than is usual with standard formats. Helps control stage fright.

Dumont, Raymond A. and John N. Cannon, *Business Communication*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985, pp. 629-638.

Chapter 21, "Oral Communication," has typical initial focus on the various types of oral presentations students will face in their careers. Focuses mainly on the preparation and delivery of extemporaneous reports.

Erickson, Keith V. and Mira T. Erickson, "Instructional Practices: Simulations and Game Exercises in Large Lecture Classes," *Communication Education*, July 1979, pp. 224-229.

Shows how simulations and games can be used in large classes as complements to the lecture method. Students see techniques as facilitating classroom communication and student interest, concept understanding, and personal growth.

Glossner, Alan J. "Improving Oral Reports: A Hueristic Approach," *The ABCA Bulletin*, September 1983, pp. 32-34.

Suggests using videotaping as a self-discovery technique. Students taped in an environment relatively free of formal evaluation can concentrate on coping with fear and discovering for themselves the characteristics of quality presentations.

Himstreet, William C. and Wayne Murlin Baty, *Business Communications*, 7th ed., Boston: Kent Publishing Company, 1984, pp. 529-546.

Chapter 19, "Speeches, Oral Reports and Group Communication" is a well balanced discussion with relevant questions appearing in the margins. Gives detailed discussion of the various types of visual aids including chalkboards, flip charts, slides, and transparencies.

Hollwitz, John and Eric Matthiesen, "A Model Syl-

labus of In-House Corporate Speech Training," *The ABCA Bulletin*, June 1981, pp. 13-15.

Describes an oral communication program developed for corporate professionals which teaches strategies for developing informative and persuasive speeches for sophisticated audiences or for general-interest groups.

Leech, Thomas, *How to Prepare, Stage, and Deliver Winning Presentations*, Amacom, American Management Associations, 1982, pp. 37-326.

"In the second part, Leech takes you step by step through his systems approach. Starting with the essential—and often neglected—planning of the presentations, this section shows you how to shape your ideas, build up your material, make the necessary arrangements, test, evaluate, and actually deliver your presentation. Here Leech also discusses the importance of handling feedback from your listeners and shows you how to follow up on your presentations."

Leonard, Donald J., *Shurter's Communication in Business*, 4th ed., McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979, pp. 385-393.

Chapter 21, "Oral Presentation of Reports," gives a well detailed discussion of the topic. It suggests techniques for improving oral presentation, particularly in the section entitled "Deliver With Deliberation" which details ways to build ethos and to use body language.

Lesikar, Raymond V., *Basic Business Communication*, 3rd ed. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1985, pp. 592-622.

Chapter 16, "Spoken Communication and Listening" is among the most comprehensive available in textbooks. It focuses on ethos, audience analysis, body language, vocalics, and visuals. Contains useful checklists under the various headings.

"Our Readers Write: I Tried It, and Surprise, Surprise, It 'Really' Works," *English Journal*, February, 1982, pp. 68-76.

Among the classroom techniques offered are some to develop skills in public speaking.

Pitre, Lee and Larry Smeltzer, "Graphic Reinforcement of an Oral Presentation," *The ABCA Bulletin*, December 1982, pp. 6-8.

Presents guidelines to help individuals responsible for business presentations select, design, and use visuals.

Seigle, Natalie R., "Syllabus: Oral and Written Business Communications," *The ABCA Bulletin*, December 1979, pp. 15-17.

Traces the organization of a business communication course, noting that interchanging oral business communication assignments with written assignments keeps class interest high and challenges student ingenuity.

Smith, Barbara, "'What? I Have to Give a Speech?' Integrating Oral Presentations Into a Technical Writing Course," *Technical Writing Teacher*, Spring 1981, pp. 59-61.

Offers advice on how to incorporate assignments in formal and semi-formal oral communication into the technical writing course.

Swindle, Robert E. and Elizabeth M. Swindle, *The Business Communicator*, 2nd ed., New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985, pp. 438-444.

Chapter 18, "Meetings, Speeches, and Interviews," open with typical discussion of preparation and delivery but also details the fielding of questions and the use of radio and television. Also details the use of visuals including charts, overheads, and movies.

Wilcox, Roger P., *Communication at Work: Writing and Speaking*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977, pp. 440-469.

Chapter 12, "The Oral Presentation" is a good, general discussion which gives practical suggestions in the form of examples and lists. Includes advantages and disadvantages of oral presentations.

CAREER PREPARATION AND PLANNING

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Not since the 1930's has skill in career preparation and planning been so important for college graduates. The narrowed specialization and intense competition that characterize the job market require job applicants to make conscious decisions early in their college careers. Furthermore, today's graduates must be able to show how they can communicate *before* being hired by preparing an application package that shows their abilities. No longer is the college degree readily accepted as adequate proof of professional competency as it was in the past.

The objectives of this unit are to provide, first, an overview of the theory and principles behind career preparation; second, an outline for a suggested classroom unit; and, third, suggested classroom activities. These are followed by an annotated bibliography suggesting a wide range of possible sources one could go to for more details.

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

The search for a fulfilling career position can be difficult and highly competitive. Depending upon the business and economic climate, jobs for college graduates may or may not be plentiful—but really good jobs are always scarce. Those excellent first jobs students dream of are won only by those applicants with strong qualifications who effectively communicate those qualifications. In addition the successful applicants have engaged in career preparation and planning.

The Concept of Career Preparation and Planning

Each person has a unique combination of values, philosophy, personality, interests, intelligence, and educational work experiences. Career preparation and planning is goal-directed behavior that involves individual introspection, analysis of the world of work, communication with employment prospects, and integration of what is learned with reality. Career preparation and planning is an individualized decision-making process that involves compromise to develop a career goal and a set of priorities related to long-term employment. Thus, career planning occurs over a lifetime but has special significance in the early stages of life, particularly in the college years.

The Career Planning Process

According to Mark Twain, "the happiest and most successful person works all year long at what he would otherwise choose to do on his summer vacation." Thus, each individual should work at something that makes full use of the interests, aptitudes, and other personal characteristics of that individual. Such efforts require career planning.

Self-assessment

The first step in career planning begins with a self-assessment designed to answer the basic questions: What do I want to do? What can I do? What needs to be done? The essence of career planning is

merging information related to a person and information related to a career.

Career exploration

The next step involves developing information about career alternatives. Although a wealth of information about most career fields exists, it is seldom located in one or two convenient sources. Thus, exploration involves digging into a mass of information to cull out that considered most pertinent.

Integration

After the self-assessment and career exploration, the information discovered must be integrated. Integration can be frustrating and usually involves compromise as the pieces rarely fit neatly together. The end result of integration is a definitely stated career objective, formulated in a manner that permits communication to others.

Communication

The vital step of communication requires that the individual's qualifications be successfully communicated to prospective employers. As a college student approaches graduation, the first good chance to communicate qualifications comes with the resume, application letter, and interview. Success or failure in these communication efforts could determine how an individual spends the remainder of life. The applicant's basic job in communicating is to show by selection and interpretation of facts that he or she can fit into the work the employer wants done.

Placement

The placement function provides a road map for the career planning process. It continues to serve as a feedback loop that reinforces or alters the career goals established earlier. A career planning cycle is depicted in Figure 1. Placement represents the portion of the cycle which tests earlier decisions through a real-world exposure.

Summary

To summarize, career planning is a process that involves self-assessment, career exploration, integration, communication, and job placement. The process occurs in an integrative decision-making framework with established time constraints which force compromise.

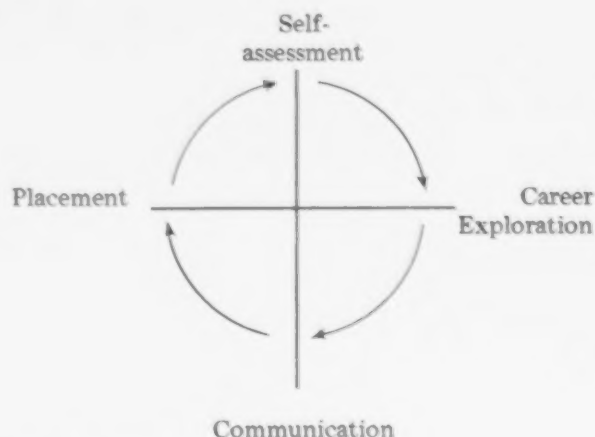


Figure 1
Career Planning Cycle

SUGGESTED TEACHING UNIT

The most tangible result of the career preparation unit will be a polished letter of application and resume. The unit will also prepare students for personal interviews and other activities which will enhance their confidence and help to ensure a successful job search. Ideally, if the overall course design permits, the unit can also be used to give the students further practice in business communication skills which have already been introduced in the course—e.g., the writing of memo reports and letters of several types.

Timing of the Course Itself as Related to the Unit

Although students nearing graduation will most readily appreciate the value of this unit, it can easily be adapted to serve the needs of sophomore and even freshman students. This adaptation is achieved in two ways. First, the introduction to the unit should stress that it allows the students to anticipate and plan intelligently for the development of both academic and nonacademic credentials (such as part-time work experience and participation in professional societies) which will make them attractive to potential employers. Second, the letter of application and resume may be adap-

ted to the search for summer or part-time employment; these early versions will serve as a basis for later versions, as the student nears graduation.

Timing of the Unit Within the Course

The unit should be introduced no earlier than mid-point in the course, after the students have acquired basic letter-writing skills and some experience with short reports. The unit itself works best if it is given adequate germination time; that is, it should not be presented as a compact, rapid-fire set of exercises and assignments but should be spread over a period of approximately three weeks.

The Unit's Objectives

During the development of the unit, students should achieve the following basic objectives, which are listed in chronological order:

1. Clear definition of students' short- and long-range career goals, and a realistic self-assessment of their marketable skills;
2. An understanding of the importance of researching an organization before applying for a position in it, and techniques for conducting that research;
3. The development of an effective, readily modified letter of application and resume which students will be able to use in "the real world";
4. Readiness for the personal interview;
5. Competence in preparing job application forms and writing follow-up letters after interviews, as well as other letters related to the job search.

Components of the Unit

Some of the components listed below are optional, depending on the time available for the unit. Some components entail individual out-of-class exercises; some call for in-class activities.

- I. Introduction: The importance of well-organized career preparation
- II. Self-definition of career goals and marketable skills
 - A. Autobiographical sketch
 - B. Analysis of the student's work and activity record
 - C. Concise statement of short- and long-range career goals
- III. Research
 - A. Research into available entry-level positions in a specific organization (which will

be the target of the application letter), and into the organization's history, operations, etc.

- B. Preparation of a memo report describing the results of this research
- C. An oral report based on the activities listed in III. A. and B.
- D. A letter of inquiry to the chosen organization, including a questionnaire. (This letter might focus on job qualifications, information desired in the resume, etc.)
- IV. Preparation of the letter of application and resume
 - A. Discussion of psychological strategy in the letter
 - B. Discussion of resume format, including logical structure, use of headings and itemization, parallelism, etc.
 - C. Submission of typed rough drafts of the letter and resume
 - D. Individual student-instructor conferences
 - E. Submission of professionally prepared final versions of the application letter
- V. Preparation for the personal interview
 - A. Background: timing, personal appearance, general readiness
 - B. Preparation for effective answering and asking of questions
 - C. Exposure to the interviewing process
 1. Pairing of students for practice interviews
 2. Evaluating staged interviews (successful and unsuccessful)
 3. Guest lecture by an experienced professional interviewer
- VI. Post-interview activities
 - A. The job application form
 - B. The follow-up letter expressing appreciation for the interview
 - C. Letters of acceptance and refusal

Comments

A fully developed unit like the one described above is time-consuming; its justification lies partly in the fact that it can be used to enhance the students' letter-writing, report-writing, outlining, and oral communication skills. At a time when many employers are complaining about young employees' inadequacy with respect to oral communication, the opportunity this unit affords to improve the students' oral skills should not be overlooked.

The instructor should give careful attention to the choice of a resume format for the students' use:

a wide variety of formats is available, and some of them (even some included in business communications textbooks) are antiquated, illogical, unnecessarily difficult to read, or wasteful of space. Because one format is not as good as another, the wise instructor will be prescriptive—providing the class with *one* format which is flexible enough to adapt to the needs of individual students.

The experience of seeing a written document through preparatory stages to a professional-level final version also deserves emphasis. The marketplace is flooded with shoddily prepared, unattractive, self-defeating job applications, many of them put together hastily and without knowledgeable guidance. We can ensure not only that our students will possess respectable written job applications, but also that they will complete the Career Preparation unit with a good understanding of the effort that goes into any effective, attractive written presentation.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

When teaching the complicated process of career preparation and planning, an instructor needs to realize that not all students know where they are going. Even upper division students often have no clear notion of where they want to go in life.

Identifying Goals

Help students clarify goals *before* they begin the process of writing resumes and letters of application. Goals are individual and not the result of group activities. Thus, the instructor should consider using the following analytical questions developed by Buskirk¹ as an individual exercise to help students evaluate potential careers. Forcing the students to evaluate critically their wants and needs helps the students to evaluate objectively alternative careers. Have each student answer as honestly as possible the following questions:

1. How much money do you really need to consider yourself successful?
2. What kind of work do you really want to do?
3. What type of environment do you want—living and work?
4. What are your social needs—your family's?
5. What kind of family life do you want to lead?
6. How much prestige does your ego require?
7. How much security must you have?

Asking students to evaluate career opportunities in light of their responses to these questions helps

them better evaluate the desirability of a particular career. During class point out that answers to the seven questions may reveal some conflicts. A student may not be able to find a career that satisfies all the needs revealed by the questions, and conflicting goals within a career are common. Only when the student identifies these conflicts can he or she decide which of several alternatives is acceptable.

Self and Career Evaluation

The career-planning process also involves evaluation of individual characteristics. Dauw² provides workbook materials useful in a classroom or private setting to evaluate careers and individuals and the match between them. Two useful exercises can be drawn from his suggestions:

1. Have students list five occupations they would consider and place them in priority sequence.
2. Using Dauw's occupations finder's code list, have students identify three descriptors for each of their five occupations—realistic, investigative, artistic, social, conventional, or enterprising.

By forcing the students to evaluate objectively the characteristics of their chosen professions, you enable them to determine whether their personality traits match.

3. Next, have the students evaluate the activities they like and dislike and the competencies they have by using questionnaires similar to Dauw's.

Since the activities and competencies are arranged in the same categories as the occupations, i.e., realistic, investigative, etc., students become aware of unrealistic goals once they have been forced to match their activities and competencies with characteristics of chosen careers.

4. Have each student identify characteristics of the personality types which best describe him or her and compare those personality descriptions with personality descriptions for each career.

Students may need help in describing personality characteristics of various careers.

Career Evaluation

Not all students will have realistic expectations for certain careers, but capitalizing on the experience of students through class discussions will help the inexperienced in the classroom. Guest speakers from various career areas can provide needed insight as well. Brainstorming can reveal mistaken as well as uninformed perceptions of career characteristics. Small discussion groups for those with similar career goals help clarify understanding of careers.

Counseling staffs, available on most college campuses, provide supplemental out-of-class support for units in career preparation. They can also provide in-class expertise; use these persons as guest speakers and as resources.

Developing a Job-Hunting Strategy

Once students have realistically dealt with their goals and attributes as well as those of various careers, have them begin putting their assessment of their attributes on paper by constructing a resume for a specific job. Searching the want ads or the placement bulletin board for notices of positions and delineating characteristics necessary for that position and then constructing a resume using their qualifications will enable potential employees to think again in terms of the qualifications for that career. Material such as that published by International Paper³ can be used to supplement and emphasize other materials the teacher chooses to use.

Summary

Classroom activities in career planning should incorporate activities which focus on two areas—assessment of the individual as well as assessment of careers. Once these two areas have been clarified, a matching of characteristics should occur. One of the best clarification devices, unavailable within the time constraints of the classroom, is experience. Only when students have the opportunity to experience work in various settings are they able to understand realistically what is involved with that career.

NOTES

1. Buskirk, Richard H., *Your Career: How to Plan It, Manage It, Change It*, Boston: Cahnners Books, Inc., 1976, pp. 16-22.
2. Dauw, Dean C., *Up Your Career*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1980, pp. 17-48.
3. "How to Write a Resume," International Paper Company, Dept. 10, P.O. Box 954, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10010.

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Reviews the nature and limits of selection interviewing, arguing that quite dramatic improvements seem possible. Lists seven areas of needed research including job and person description, states of consciousness, and training.

Beigeleise, J. L., *Job Resumes*, New York: Gosset and Dunlap, 1976.

Reviews purposes of resumes, areas to be covered, and format. Wide choice of resume styles offered as examples.

Carl, Helen, "Nonverbal Communication During the Employment Interview," *The ABCA Bulletin*, December 1980, pp. 14-19.

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Cohen, William A., *The Executive's Guide to Find-*

ing A Superior Job, New York: AMACOM, 1978.

Shows potential candidates how to develop and conduct a job campaign from career evaluation through salary negotiations.

Cowen, Leonard, *Your Resume: Key to a Better Job*, New York: Arco Publishing, Inc., 1979.

Step-by-step guide to preparation of a resume. Stresses tactics for getting attention. Also covers responses to help-wanted ads and the interview process.

Dickhut, Harold W., *Professional Resume/Job Search Guide*, Chicago: Management Counselors, Inc., 1978.

Jobs search guide and suggestions on organizing resume material, with samples of resumes and information on interviews.

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Gives guidelines for creating better cover letters in terms of form, content, and tone.

Half, Robert, "Want to Hire Smart? Here's How to Do It," *Marketing Times*, May/June 1983, pp. 9-10.

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Kocher, Eric, *International Jobs*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979.

"A Handbook for over 500 Career Opportunities Around the World." Details international career planning and job strategy and the international job market.

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Gives steps leading to a "powerful" resume and suggests ways to remedy deficient qualifications (e.g., lack of work experience).

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McClintock, Charles C. and Raymond G. Hunt, "Nonverbal Indicators of Affect and Deception in an Interview Setting," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 5, 1975, pp. 54-67.

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McGovern, Thomas V. and Howard E. A. Tinsley, "Interviewer Evaluations of Interviewee Nonverbal Behavior," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 13, 1978, pp. 163-171.

Reports results of experiments in which the interviewee's nonverbal behavior was manipulated to yield "low" and "high" nonverbal patterns. The subjects rated videotaped candidates on dimensions previously identified as critical in influencing an interviewer's decisions. Nonverbal behavior was found to have a significant effect on almost every rating made.

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Pilder, Richard J. and William F. Pilder, *How to Find Your Life's Work*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

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